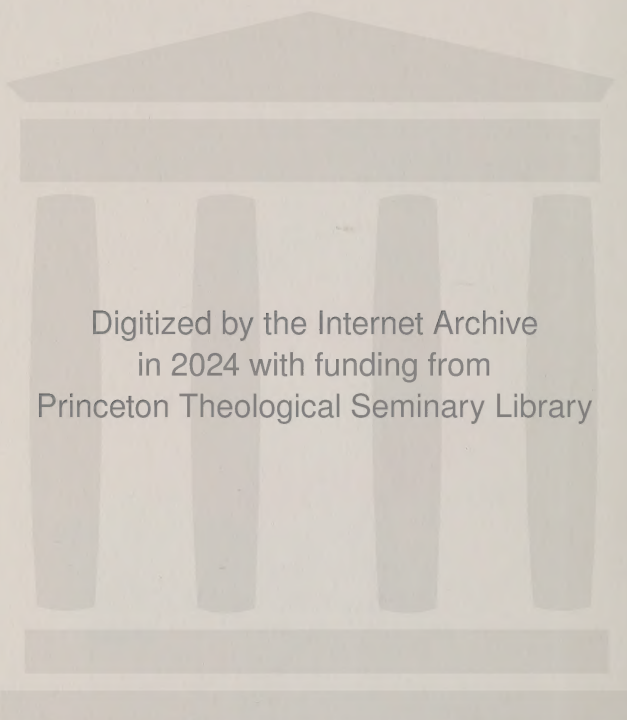


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John Wesley's religious
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JOHN WESLEY'S
RELIGIOUS QUEST

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JOHN WESLEY'S
RELIGIOUS QUEST

by
✓
THOMAS REED JEFFERY

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FIRST EDITION

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To Him Who Came Seeking the Lost

To All Who Seek Him in Sincerity and Truth

This Book Is Reverently and Gratefully Dedicated

By One Who Was Found of Him

JOHN WESLEY'S
RELIGIOUS QUEST

FOREWORD

A quarter century ago, having been reading Wesley literature cursorily for a score of years, I began to ask myself why a man of Wesley's heritage, home training, and intellectual caliber required thirteen years to find the first and simplest part of the Gospel. Thereupon I began to make an attentive study of Wesley's life during those years, and to put in writing the data on that quest.

I did this for myself and did not dream of writing for publication.

In 1948, I made a sketch of Wesley's course to serve as a guide for full study. Expansion of the sketch followed. As it advanced, there arose the question: Why would not this account of the seeking of one who found be of help to other seekers? I then made up my mind to seek publication. The result is this volume.

Acknowledgment of help received comprises many writers—those of the past, beginning with Whitehead, as well as those of the present—to most of whose works I have had access. Most important of all are the wondrous writings of John Wesley himself, from which this work primarily drew, thus allowing the man to speak for himself.

I feel a particular debt of gratitude to the rich Moravian Archives at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, whose curator, Bishop S. H. Gapp, put them freely at my disposal. His permission to use his own and Dr. Schwarze's recent translations of some pertinent letters of Peter Böhler's brings new material into the closing weeks of Wesley's quest.

Grateful acknowledgment is made, too, of the ready helpfulness of Miss Mary Snively, Librarian of the Moravian College and Seminary at Bethlehem.

I wish also to record the influence of Dr. Walter J. Leppert, whose earnest plea that I write this book was a more decisive factor than he realizes.

Thanks are given to my niece, Kay Jones, for her capable reading, correcting, and typing of the whole manuscript.

Far, far from the least important among the many helpful contributions to this endeavor was my deceased wife Selma S. Jeffery's patient and kindly acceptance of the frequent separations imposed by the long and arduous tasks of research and writing.

—T.R.J.

CHAPTER ONE

WE ARE TO follow John Wesley in his quest for inner religious satisfaction. That search began in 1725, when he was twenty-two years old, and ended in 1738, when he was thirty-five. His quest consumed thirteen years of his life.

Geographically, this quest involved England, especially the communities of Oxford, London, South Leigh, Epworth, Wroote, Oxford again, Putney, and London again. It ramified into two other continents: North America, in Georgia and South Carolina; and Europe, in Germany.

Places thus involved comprise his home, the University, a city, rural parishes, the raw New World, obscure meeting rooms, St. Paul's Cathedral, and a Society room on a small street.

It ranged over home training, university laxity, observance of formal religious practices, increase of their use, the decision concerning his life's work, self-confidence, self-examination, trust in his own good works, nascent discontent, resort to mysticism, discard of mysticism, hope in unspoiled New World aborigines, awakening, glimpses of Gospel faith, opposition to these, defeat in that hostility, resolution to accept that faith, delay in finding, restlessness, discouragement, gloom, and, at last, experience.

His quest included many books. The more significant ones were: The Scriptures; Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*; Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*; William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* and *Christian Perfection*; Henry Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, the life of Thomas Halyburton; and Martin Luther's *Introduction to Romans*.

Helpful people were his parents, a "religious friend," the young students of the Holy Club at Oxford, his younger brother Charles, "an old man," William Law, Moravian emigrants to Georgia, the Georgia Indians, August Spangenberg, small prayer groups, a conference of Anglican clergy in Charleston, South Carolina; above all these, Peter Böhler; and, finally, the Moravian community at Herrnhut in Germany.

Such was the wide panorama of John Wesley's religious quest. Detail and amplification are adduced below.

John Wesley's father, Reverend Samuel Wesley, was born in 1662, and died on April 25, 1735. His mother was born on January 20, 1669, and lived till July 23, 1742. Daughter of a minister, and the youngest of a family of twenty-five¹ children, Susannah Annesley married Samuel Wesley in 1688.² They became the parents of nineteen children, born between 1690 and 1710. Of these, nine died and ten lived.³ The fifteenth child was John Wesley, born June 28, 1703. He lived eighty-eight years, dying on March 2, 1791. He was named John Benjamin Wesley, the only child given a middle name.⁴

His long life falls into these periods:

1703-14. Eleven years at home.

1714-25. Eleven years at school.

1725-38. Thirteen years of quest.

1739-91. Fifty-two years of active ministry.

The present theme involves the first of these periods only in a minor sense, for the clear reason that during it he was not a seeker at all. His search falls into the second and third periods, especially into the third one.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELATION between John Wesley's first period and his quest exists in the religious legacy of his ancestry and in his religious training at home.

His ancestry was of great advantage to John Wesley. Back to A.D. 1400, and to earlier Saxon times, it can be traced. Later, there arose Irish and English branches of the family. In both were clergy of high rank.

"We strike the direct line of the Wesley pedigree when we come on the name of Bartholomew Westley," writes John S. Simon.¹ Born in 1596,² Bartholomew was John Wesley's great-grandfather. He had attended University which is "supposed to be Oxford,"³ studying both divinity and medicine. Admitted to the clergy of the Established Church, he took side with its Puritan reformers. Thus, his support of Cromwell later led to his ejection from its ministry. Thereafter, he became predominantly a physician.

Grandfather to Wesley was Bartholomew's son, John Westley. Hurst claims that, to the Methodists, he is the "First"⁴ John Wesley.⁵ "Convinced of a call from God to the work of a gospel preacher and Evangelist,"⁶ he entered Oxford University, where he "displayed the Wesley hunger for knowledge, and distinguished himself by his study of Oriental languages."⁷ In 1655, aged nineteen, he received the A.B. degree, and his M.A. two years later. He refused regular Episcopal ordination but became minister of a church. Therein he was so successful in getting people "converted to the power of godliness from ignorance and profaneness," that his congregation set apart a day upon which they gave him presbyterial ordination. Summoned for questioning before Bishop Ironside of Bristol, he stated his conviction that the success of his work was the seal of his call and the vindication of his ministry; and the bishop did not interfere, saying, "I will not meddle with you."⁸ Though his ministry at first was eminently successful, it fell at the time of England's struggle of Monarchy versus Commonwealth and was stormy; he was ejected from two churches; four times was imprisoned; and,

dying at the early age of thirty-four years, his body was refused burial in the yard of his own church at Preston,⁹ it being interred in the garden of his former home.¹⁰

Father to John Wesley was Samuel Wesley. About 1658, John Westley married the "orphan daughter" of John White of Dorchester. Born in 1575, he was named "the patriarch of Dorchester," and it is recorded of him that the founding of Massachusetts Colony "must be attributed to his sagacious and indomitable efforts."¹¹ John Westley and this woman became the parents, in 1662, of a son whom they named Samuel Westley.¹²

John Westley died when this son was nine years of age. The boy was reared by his mother and an aged aunt, both of whom were ardent Dissenters. Until his fifteenth year, they sent Samuel to the Free School at Dorchester, but then they were too poor to give him further education. However, in that area of South England was a Dissenter congregation which made it a service to care for indigent students, and it provided Samuel with thirty pounds a year. He entered a Dissenter school in London.¹³ Recognized there as a youth of "considerable talents," he was requested to write a reply to some harsh criticism of Dissenters.¹⁴ Preparatory reading furnished him reason to alter his opinion of Dissenters. He forthwith renounced Dissent and resolved to "attach himself to the Established Church." Of course, this step would end his Dissenter financial support, besides affronting his mother and aunt. "He, therefore, got up one morning at a very early hour, and, without acquainting anyone with his purpose, set out on foot to Oxford and entered Exeter College."¹⁵ He entered as a servitor—that is, as a kind of a valet to certain students who would pay for such services as bringing their meals, caring for their clothes, and so on. Thus, by aid from the college, by tutoring, and by writing poems, he supported himself.

Former Dissenter acquaintances, greatly displeased, reminded him of the sufferings of his father and grandfather at the hands of the Established Church. They reminded him also of the obligation to them for paying his way in school. He nonetheless adhered to his conviction.

He kept, however, the Evangelical doctrines of the Dissenters. In the University, he met Unitarianism but discarded it; also, he visited the local prisons, thereby making footprints which, forty years later, his sons John and Charles would tread.

June 19, 1688, he graduated. Seven weeks later,¹⁶ he was ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church and, on February 25, 1689, was ordained a priest.¹⁷

Though Samuel Wesley had strong feelings, stubbornness, and what his daughter Emilia characterized as an "unaccountable love of discord,"¹⁸ yet he was indefatigably industrious, conscientious, devout and loyal. His wife described him as a "religious orthodox man."¹⁹ Her statement that her marriage to such a man was one of life's greatest mercies to her is ample praise of Samuel Wesley.

Such was the father who would be John Wesley's teacher, guide and counsellor, but never his heart-to-heart confessor and confidant.²⁰

John Wesley's maternal ancestry blessed him through his grandfather and his mother.

In the register of the church at Halseley, near Stratford-on-Avon, is this record: "27th March, 1620 . . . Samuell, the Sonne of John Ansley, and Judith his wife."²¹ With the name altered to Annesley, this child would become the maternal grandfather of John Wesley.

When Samuel Annesley was four years of age, his father died and his mother reared him.²² She sent him to a Non-Conformist school, and in his fifteenth year he entered Oxford. There he became well known. In physique, he was "tall and dignified, and of robust constitution . . . he had wavy brown hair and a strong penetrating eye."²³

In conduct, he was sober, diligent in study, and devout in religion. As a child, he dreamed he was a minister summoned to martyrdom. When but six years of age, he daily read chapters of the Bible. Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, who knew Samuel Annesley well, and who sat under his ministry, wrote of him:

His pious course with childhood he began,
And was his Maker's sooner than his own. . . .
The sacred study all his thoughts confined—
A sign what Secret Hand prepared his mind.
The Sacred Book he made his only school,
In youth his study, and in age his rule.²⁴

Graduating at Oxford, in 1648, he received the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Ordained a minister, for a time he was chaplain on the flagship of the Lord High Admiral, and next became a parish minister. Aged twenty-eight, he preached the Fast Day Sermon in the House of Commons. Cromwell, in 1657, appointed him "Lord's Day Evening Lecturer at St. Paul's," and made him vicar of St. Giles's, the largest congregation

in London. Though persecuted later, his wealth kept him and his family from distress, and also enabled him to aid others. His pervading cheerfulness and geniality were due, largely, to his personal religious experience, in which he had the inner assurance of his acceptance with God.²⁵ His ministry ended with his death on the last day of 1696, some of his final words being: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness; satisfied! satisfied!"²⁶

Most potent and direct of all ancestral heritages of John Wesley was that of his mother Susannah. Samuel Annesley's second wife was the daughter of John White.²⁷ Their youngest child was Susannah Annesley, born January 20, 1669.

View a sketch of the woman and her work. . . .

First, the woman. "Beautiful as Miss Annesley appears, she was far from being as beautiful as Mrs. Wesley," one writes in comparing Susannah Wesley with her sister Judith.²⁸ One reads this also: "The mother of the Wesleys had no claim to great beauty, but her features were good and her figure slight and graceful. Her face was grave and thoughtful, her expression serene rather than vivacious . . . she possessed the inborn dignity which compels respect."²⁹ These two statements of the physical appearance of Susannah Wesley are the nether and upper limits within which she is to be described. The first is by one who "knew both the girls." The other is from one of John Wesley's later biographers, writing in 1929. The clear fact is that Susannah Wesley was above the ordinary in appearance

More important than looks is character. Adam Clarke, the Methodist preacher and scholar, an intimate of John Wesley, wrote of Susannah Wesley: "I have been acquainted with many pious females; I have read the lives of others; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted."³⁰

Any true sketch of Susannah Wesley must include the power and independence of her mind and spirit. An early appearance of this is seen in her transfer of her church allegiance from Non-Conformity to the Established Church. In her early years, religious controversies were plenty and acute. These Susannah Annesley did not dismiss as unworthy of her notice. What she did she recorded in 1709, in a letter to her son, Samuel Jr. She informed him about her change in religious affiliation in this statement: "Because I was educated among the Dissenters,

and there was something remarkable in my leaving them at so early an age, not being full thirteen, I had drawn up an account of the whole transaction, under which I had included the main of the controversy between them and the Established Church, as far as it had come to my knowledge; and then followed the reasons which had determined my judgment to the preference of the church of England."³¹ That is: a girl not yet thirteen years of age, daughter of a Non-Conformist minister, had thought her way through a keen contemporary religious controversy and had come to the decision to leave her father's church for another. One historian tells, she "expressed her opinions against the church of her distinguished father with such tact and sweetness of spirit as to win his consent to her confirmation at St. Paul's."³²

It has been noted above that, about his twentieth year, Samuel Wesley discarded the Dissenters and embraced Anglicanism. Born in 1662, that year would be 1682. Now, note also that Susannah Annesley discarded the Non-Conformists and accepted Anglicanism in "near" her thirteenth year. Born in 1669, that year would be 1682. Thus, both made the change at approximately the same time.

Just here, romance arises too readily. G. Elsie Harrison is sure of it: "Her very maiden love of Samuel Wesley had been born in a theological argument. The Dissenters were fast becoming Unitarians, but there had been something of the grand manner about the way that young Sam Wesley had stayed her reasonable hands when she would have divested Christ of His Divinity."³³ Caleb Winchester allows romance: "It may be reasonably conjectured that the acquaintance with young Samuel Wesley, who was just then making a similar change, may have had something to do with her decision."³⁴ More safely, Hurst wrote: "It is possible that the two ecclesiastical conversions were not unconnected."³⁵

Certainly, these two young folks broke from the religious heritage and tradition of their forebears, but it was done seven years before their marriage. Truly remarkable is this fact: the man and woman who were to be the physical, domestic, cultural, theological and religious crucible of a fresh and wide advance in the Christian faith came to their like religious conviction, not out of a rebellious spirit, nor from a craving for the new, but from examination of such pertinent data as they possessed. Dissent need not mourn their loss nor Establishment rejoice over their accession; for in the not-far future these two young people would beget the two men who, unwillingly and in adverse ways, would depart from both those camps.

No adequate presentation of Susannah Wesley, the woman, can omit her devotional life. It began early. Writing to one of her sons upon the practice of devotion, she disclosed her own rule: "I will tell you what rule I observed in the same case, when I was young, and too much addicted to childish diversions, which was this—never to spend more time in any matter of mere recreation in one day, than I spent in private religious duties."³⁶ Three times a day, she went apart for private devotion and meditation, writing her meditations and marking them with the time of their composition, as "Morning," "Noon," "Evening." One of them reads thus:

If to esteem and have the highest reverence for Thee; if constantly and sincerely to acknowledge Thee the supreme, the only desirable good, be to love Thee—I do love Thee! If to rejoice in thy essential majesty and glory; if to feel a vital joy overspread and cheer the heart at each perception of thy blessedness, at every thought that thou art God, and that all things are in thy power; that there is none superior or equal to thee, be to love Thee—I do love thee! If comparatively to despise and undervalue all the world contains which is esteemed great, fair, and good; if earnestly and constantly to desire thee, thy favour, thy acceptance, thyself, rather than any or all things thou hast created, be to love thee—I do love thee!³⁷

Very true, therefore, is Adam Clarke's comment upon this paragraph: "In these reflections and meditations the reader will see something of the mind, the spirit, the heart, and the piety of Mrs. Susannah Wesley."³⁸

Second, her works. The works which she did pertinent to the present purpose are comprised in the early training of her children. "Strictly educated and carefully taught," they were.

In this training all the surviving Wesley boys and girls shared. Quiller-Couch thought the Wesley boys were esteemed inordinately in the father's attitude. Perhaps this was due to the fact that seven known girls survived, but only three boys—Samuel, John and Charles. Their mother was more impartial, yet even she had a greater regard for John. Certainly, after the fire of 1709, in which John nearly perished, she had a sense of his being a person with a particular destiny. She expressed it in this vow: "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou hast so mercifully provided for than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavour to instill into his mind the principles

of true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."³⁹

This mother's vow, with its ensuing domestic, mental, moral and religious training, is the richest part of John Wesley's ancestral heritage. The ways in which Susannah Wesley trained and educated her large family have come to us from her own pen, John having requested her in 1732 to write out a statement of them.⁴⁰ Their gist is as follows:

From birth, the children were "put into a regular method" of living. When a year old, "they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly," so that the "odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house." "As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day . . . they were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family." Only sickness was reason enough for drinking or eating between meals. At six in the evening, after family prayers, they had supper; at seven, they were washed; and in bed by eight, where they were let alone.

Moral and religious education began early. The basis of both was the inculcation of obedience to the parents. "In order to form the minds of children," she wrote, "the first thing to be done is to conquer their will. . . . I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education." Unless this is done, the result is stubbornness and obstinacy, which are "hardly ever conquered", and never conquered without "painful severity"—painful to both parent and child. "When the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to stand in awe and fear of its parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked . . . and others mildly reproved; but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children, without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence require."

She repeats: "I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children ensures their after-wretchedness, and is irreligion. Whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident if we further consider that religion is nothing else than doing the will of God, and not our own: that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation

unattainable; and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever."

These fundamental principles observed, the course of religious training followed these modes.

As soon as a child could speak, it was taught the Lord's Prayer, which the children were made to say morning and evening. In time were added a prayer for their parents, some collects, a short catechism, and parts of the Bible. They were taught to be still at family prayers, and afterward to ask a blessing by signs ere they could kneel or speak. Taking God's name in vain was never allowed. "They were early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days."

After the fire destroyed the rectory, in February, 1709, it was a year before another was built. Meanwhile, the children were kept by other families. As Susannah saw the results, they were these: "They were left at full liberty to converse with servants, which before they had always been restrained from, and to run abroad and play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observation of the Sabbath, and got knowledge of several songs and bad things, which before they had no notion of. That civil behaviour which made them admired at home, by all who saw them, was in a great measure lost, and a clownish accent, and many rude ways were learned, which was not reformed without some difficulty."

When the family reassembled in the new rectory, she began a "strict reform." Two new practices were instituted: "Then was begun the custom of singing psalms at beginning and leaving school, morning and evening. Then also that of a general retirement at five o'clock was entered upon; when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the psalms for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament; as in the morning, they were directed to read the psalms and a chapter in the Old. After which they went to their private prayers, before they got their breakfast, or came into the family."

To these procedures, she added weekly, personal and private interviews with each child about his or her religious life.

The practice began in this way. There were occasions when her husband was called away to certain church meetings,⁴¹ some of which absences were quite lengthy. Upon one such occasion, Susannah Wesley felt a personal responsibility for the religious care of the parish folk and of her own children, which duty she justified to her husband in these sentences: "As I am a woman, so I am also mistress of a large

family; and though the superior charge of the souls in it lies upon you; yet, in your absence, I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care, as a talent committed to me under a trust, by the great Lord of all the families . . . these and other such like thoughts made me at first take a more than ordinary care of the souls of my children."⁴²

Therefore, she began to read to her own family and servants on the Sabbaths. Others asked to attend. "Our lad told his parents: they first desired to be admitted; then others that heard of it begged leave also." From family and servants, attendance grew to thirty, forty and to over two hundred.⁴³

Having read to these folks for a time, this dawned upon her: "At last it came into my mind, though I am not a man nor a minister, yet, if my heart were sincerely devoted to God, and I was inspired with a true zeal for his glory, I might do somewhat more than I do: I thought I might pray more for them, and might speak to those with whom I converse with more warmth and affection. I resolved to begin with my own children."⁴⁴

Begin she did at once with this schedule: "I take such a proportion of time as I can spare, every night, to discourse with each child apart. On Monday, I talk with Molly, on Tuesday, with Hetty; Wednesday, with Nancy; Thursday, with Jacky; Friday, with Patty; Saturday, with Charles; and with Emily and Sukey together, on Sunday."⁴⁵

Her intellectual training of these children followed these lines. Teaching began on a child's fifth birthday. "The day before a child began to learn, the house was set in order, everyone's work was appointed them, and a charge was given that none should come into the room from nine till twelve, and from two till five; which were school hours.

"One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters . . . and, as soon as he knew the letters, began the first chapter of Genesis. . . . They were put first to spell and to read one line, then a verse; never leaving till perfect in their lesson . . . and before we left school, each child read what he had learned that morning; and ere we parted in the afternoon, what they had learned that day."

Loud talking and playing were not allowed, nor was leaving one's seat or the room except for good cause. Running out of the house during school hours was a "capital offence."

Reading and writing were stressed, the older children reading aloud to one another. Multiplication, mathematics, grammar, history and geography had place. There was "memory drill." The father taught the

Classics, including their language. Hetty could read the Greek New Testament at eight years of age. The older children were taught Christian doctrines.

From the detail of this sketch of the character of Susannah Wesley's rearing of her children, anyone fairly conversant with the later lives and practices of one of those children at least, John Wesley, must accept the estimate of her work given by Isaac Taylor, the "philosophic critic" of Methodism, who said: "The Wesleys' mother was the mother of Methodism in a religious and moral sense; for her courage, her submissiveness to authority, the high tone of her mind, its independence and its self-control, the warmth of her devotional feelings and the practical direction given to them, came up and were visibly repeated in the character and conduct of her sons."⁴⁶

CHAPTER THREE

THE SECOND PERIOD of John Wesley's life began when, on December 12, 1714,¹ Epworth and home were exchanged for London and Charterhouse School. He was eleven years of age.

Old, old in history, these school buildings were. For 342 years, they were part of a Carthusian monastery. In 1614, Thomas Sutton, a wealthy and charitable merchant, bought them for \$62,000, beginning and endowing in them a Protestant hospital, an almshouse and a grammar school. This last was a boys' school, and its founder provided for the free education of forty-four boys.² Three years before John became a student at Charterhouse, his father was in London and obtained the consent of the Duke of Buckingham for John's entering as one of these free boys, on January 28, 1714.³ He was there for six years.

Some detail of his life at Charterhouse is available. Being a free-student, or a gown-student, he wore the specified "gown of broadcloth lined with baize."⁴ He suffered under the system of fagging, but one of its features, the older students taking from the younger all their meat, he found a help; he wrote of it: "From ten to fourteen I had little but bread to eat, and not great plenty of that. I believe this was so far from hurting me, that it laid the foundation of lasting health."⁵ It can be added that the whilom paucity of food at home⁶ helped John at this point.

As he left home, his father asked him for health's sake to run around the Charterhouse garden three times each morning.⁷ He faithfully did so. The health rewards of open-air exercise he later commended to many (prescribed also, since he studied and practiced elementary medicine) and himself reaped, mainly by horseback riding.

There is the story about the usher (teacher or an assistant, to us) Andrew Tooke, who one day missed all the boys from the playground and found them in the schoolroom, gathered about John Wesley, who was "relating to them instructing stories."⁸

Mostly, he was noted for his earnest study. Sixty-seven-year-old Dr. Walker, the schoolmaster, made a favorite of him, because of his quietness, regularity and application to his studies.⁹ Of this latter phase of his conduct, his brother Samuel wrote home: "Jack is with me, and a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can."¹⁰ Real study that was for a boy of sixteen! His success in academic attainment is attested by the fact that at graduation he won the school award of nearly one hundred dollars.¹¹

Let us inquire now at this time about John Wesley's religious status. Ancestry, home training and his first years at school—where did these bring him in his religious life? He alone can answer, and his answer is as follows:

"I believe, till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that 'washing of the Holy Ghost' which was given me in baptism; having been strictly educated and taught that I could only be saved 'by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God'; in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. And those instructions, so far as they respected outward duties and sins, I gladly received and often thought of. But all that was said to me of inward obedience or holiness I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was indeed as ignorant of the true meaning of the law as I was of the gospel of Christ.

"The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scripture, and said my prayers morning and evening. And now what I hoped to be saved by, was, (1) not being so bad as other people; (2) having still a kindness for religion; and (3) reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers."

To these accounts of his religious experience or conduct during childhood and boyhood, there should be added three other items. John Telford records this one: "His father admitted him to the Lord's Table when he was only eight."¹² The next is from the year 1760. Then, in his lengthy controversy with William Law over the latter's mysticism, Law disparagingly charged Wesley with being serious in religion for only "half a month." John rebutted: "I trust I have by the grace of God been in some measure 'serious in religion' not 'half a month' only, but ever since I was six years old. . . ."¹³ The third occurred when he was "between the age of eight and nine," during an attack of smallpox.

Of his spirit under it, his mother wrote, "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without complaint."¹⁴

Study these data a little. His first definite religious consciousness came in his sixth year. Its form was a seriousness of mind and heart concerning religious matters: his own phrase is "in some measure serious." Remembering that, when he was six,¹⁵ he was nigh death in the rectory fire, one is inclined to believe the two matters were related. His mother's regarding the fire-rescued son as having a divine destiny had some effect upon him, no doubt. Thus, there was in him some degree of an awakening. Though it does not appear yet, it could be that at this time of nascent seriousness there arose, unrecognized or unadmitted as such, that fear of death which years later had a large place in John Wesley's religious quest.

Two or three years later there is likely a second junction of an outward circumstance and a religious experience: his affliction with smallpox and his receiving communion. This latter is mentioned as quite an unusual occurrence. That the two matters were quite close together in time is certain enough, but beyond that one can say only that the communing recognized the appreciably continuing seriousness of the past two years, while the illness intensified that earnestness and sharpened the boy's consciousness of the imminence of death.

These matters are the content of John Wesley's descriptive phrase, "some measure."

Next, notice his indebtedness to his baptism. Here, the man of thirty-five is looking back at the boy of six to ten. He saw his religious status of those years as characterized by a spiritual cleanness which he attributed to his baptism's mediating to him a "washing of the Holy Ghost." The implications of this record are plain. He was not born clean of potential sin, at least. In his baptism, the Holy Spirit gave him a washing of soul—that is, a cleansing from probable soiling and a condition of soul-purity. Moreover, the matured man's recollection of those years held no memory of any sin which sullied that feeling of inner freshness.

His phrase, "having been strictly educated and carefully taught," characterizes his home training; and if it does not declare, surely it implies that it was this training which kept for him that boyhood spring-time of his spirit. It was his parents who did this for him.

They did so by driving home to his mind the inseparable relation of obedience to salvation. The words, "by universal obedience, by keep-

ing all the commandments of God," might be a quoting of his father's and mother's words. Moreover, they distinguished between outward and inward obedience. The former, in its reference to "outward duties and sins," he "gladly received and often thought of." It is likely that he observed such instructions in his conduct. Wesley discipline at home and church would secure that.

Their inculcation of "inward obedience" or holiness—that is, an inner quality of spirit—he "neither understood nor remembered." His ignorance in this he specified as his lack of the true significance of both Law and Gospel.

Inasmuch as this inner obedience, or what John Wesley would call "holiness," its origin in the Gospel and its prime expression in the love which was the "fulfilling of the law" are such an integral and a continuing major ictus of the work of the Wesleys, it is to be noted that the genesis of it—at least the mention of it in time—falls into the first years of John's life. Approximately when Samuel Wesley, Sr. became acquainted with this inner reach of the Gospel might not be known; but his religious experience for near a year ere his death, in 1735, his son John thus recorded: "My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the Gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first reformers; the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before I know not; but I know that during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although at that time I understood him not.¹⁸ 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness,' said he to me, 'that is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity.' . . . I cannot therefore doubt but the spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit¹⁷ that he was a child of God."¹⁸

His mother's record is more complete. On September 3, 1739, John Wesley had quite a talk with his mother upon this experience of "inner witness." During it, she told him that until a short time before she had scarcely heard about present forgiveness of sins or of the Holy Spirit's witnessing thereto. Remember it was only in February, 1738, that John was awakened to the knowledge of the fact of any such experience.

This September 3rd conversation John pursued by asking his mother whether or not her father knew and preached this experimental assurance. Her answer was, he declared shortly ere he died,¹⁹ "that for more

than forty years he had no darkness, nor fear, no doubt at all of his being 'accepted in the Beloved.' " However, not ever having heard him preach upon such assurance, she supposed he regarded his experience as "the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God." She said to John: "Therefore, I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall²⁰ was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,' the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven *me* all *my* sins."²¹ Thus, a father's failure to testify to his own experience delayed a daughter's until three years before her death.

Yet Susannah Wesley did not fail to reach out beyond her natural powers for something she did not have. One of her meditations, marked "Noon," reads: "To know God only as a philosopher; to have the most sublime and curious speculations concerning His essence, His attributes, His providence; to be able to demonstrate His being from all or any of His works of nature; and to discourse, with the greatest elegancy and propriety of words, or His existence or operations, will avail us nothing, unless at the same time we know Him experimentally; unless the heart perceive and know Him to be its supreme good, its only happiness; unless the soul feel and acknowledge that she can find no repose, no peace, no joy, but in loving and being by Him; and does accordingly rest in Him as the center of her being, the fountain of her pleasure, the origin of all virtue and goodness, her light, her life, her strength, her all; everything she wants or wishes in this world, and forever! In a word, HER LORD, HER GOD!

"Thus, let me ever know Thee, O God! I do not despise nor neglect the light of reason, nor that knowledge of Thee which by her conduct may be collected from this goodly system of created beings; but this speculative knowledge is not the knowledge I want and wish for."²²

Again, she wrote: "Nothing less than the same Almighty Power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead can raise our souls from the death of sin to a life of holiness. To know God experimentally is altogether supernatural, and what we can never attain to but by the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ."²³

These quotes inform one of some of the specific matters of his parents' training, which John Wesley characterized as "inward obedience or holiness," of which he said he "understood not." It is not surprising he did not understand. Neither did his mother understand—or, at the

least, following the example of her father's reticence about his inner personal religious experience, she might not have been able to reach yet that which she did discern. However, these paragraphs of hers show she was not far from the kingdom of inner experience and assurance: she knows the truth of John 1:13, and states the pattern John will fill in quite fully later. She herself will come to that innerness but a year after John—too late to bear witness to him.

The religious autobiography of many another student appears in John Wesley's summary of his own: "Outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before."

Evaluations of this statement vary widely. Luke Tyerman's is: "Terrible is the danger when a child leaves a pious home for a public school. John Wesley entered Charterhouse a saint. He left it a sinner."²⁴ Arnold Lunn's understanding of Wesley's words reads: "Wesley was, perhaps, a little too anxious to believe that he, like many of the great saints, had passed through a stage of lurid wickedness."²⁵

Both these authors begin with Wesley as a saint in his pre-school days. The demolition of this estimate is done by Wesley's own words, "much more negligent than before." Coupled with "outward restraints," they declare his religious life and practice in boyhood were quite off even from aspiring and much less from actual sainthood. He admits negligences and, what is quite normal, admits it was home custom and parental restraint alone, not his will, which kept him from the wider neglect at school of his religious practices.

Tyerman and Lunn begin with John Wesley as a saint. Then the first judges him to be a sinner. The second takes the matured man as a saint and makes him exaggerate long-past negligences into "lurid wickedness," in order that he might have the mark of all true saints. The first is too sweeping. The second is too stereotyped. It is quite unbelievable that eleven-year-old John Wesley regarded himself then as much of a sinner, lurid or otherwise, when he would have little consciousness of sin until years later. Even more difficult is it to believe the mature man was desirous of discovering for any reason whatever past sins of any kind. What sort of a saint would be the one who assumed past sins as confirming present saintliness?

Turn from these to John Wesley's own words. Their broad fact is this: his religious practices at school were different from those at home. The disparity consisted in a greater negligence of outward duties and

a wider committal of outward sins. The detail of these two phrases, he put into three categories:

1. Not being so bad as other people.
2. Having still a kindness for religion.
3. Reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers.

Examine these three awhile.

"Not being so bad as other people" is to be interpreted in accord with his characterization of them as "outward sins." These his frank and realistic understanding recognized as such, but common social practice was his justification of them—they were "not scandalous" in the eyes of the generality of people.

Some accurate and specific knowledge of what he meant by outward and nonscandalous sins is furnished us from a list in his *Diary*²⁶ for December 1, 1725. Some of these are: "Breach of vows . . . Pride of my parts or holiness: greedy of praise: peevishness: idleness. Intemperance in sleep: sins of thought . . . lying: rash censures: contemning others: disrespect of governors: desire to seem better than I am."²⁷ Four years earlier, he mentioned some of the above, but others, too: "Useless employments and knowledge . . . never on any account pass a day without setting aside at least an hour for devotion [he had been omitting some of his Bible reading and prayer, apparently]. . . . Too much addicting myself to light behaviour . . . listening too much to idle talk, or reading vain plays or books . . . avoid . . . freedom with women, and high-seasoned meats. . . . To resist the very beginnings of lust. . . ." ²⁸

He ended this latter list with the ejaculation, "Lord, have mercy."²⁹

Such being most probably his evil practices, his attitude towards religion he next expresses in the words: "having still a kindness for religion." Quite easy is it to understand this item as a patronizing attitude, behind which is the conscious or unconscious sense of superiority. In this case there could be a pinch of this. It might also be a bit of nostalgia for the earnest and sincere piety of Epworth rectory. Surely, it was at least an unquenched spark in the bit of flax indicating its presence by the thin and wavering column of smoke.

"Reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers"—these were his positive religious practices. To each, there is an outward, rote character. Neither is what each will become—vital, major, steady, jubi-

lant, empowering daily experience and practice. What of such practices was there now is not present by John Wesley's own will, but by sound home training, begun early and maintained with unusual regularity by those who were convinced believers. His parents made these indispensable practices the irreducible religious limit beyond which he undoubtedly wandered at times, but to which he returned. In his earlier student years, they were sure anchors. Had they not been there, Luke Tyerman's dark description might have become Wesley's biography.

These, then, are the specific items which fill in the area between the poles of John Wesley's religious life from six to sixteen: "In some measure serious"—"much more negligent."

To date, he is not a seeker.

CHAPTER FOUR

JUNE 24, 1720, John Wesley, aged seventeen, entered Oxford University. The general run of contemporary Oxford students was characterized by one diarist as "the rudest, the most giddy, and unruly rabble, and most mischievous."¹ Among these students was a Samuel Badcock, whose description of university-student Wesley was this: "The very sensible and acute collegian, baffling every man by the subtleties of his logic, and laughing at them for being so easily routed; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments . . . gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humor."²

However, judging from extant data, the collegian was not the whole of Wesley in his university years. He wrote his mother that he was "seldom troubled with anything but bleeding at the nose," one occurrence of which he cured by stripping and plunging into the river beside which he was walking.³ This, and a cut on his thumb almost severing it at its mid-joint, are the only physical difficulties mentioned in the letters of those years. His good health resulted partly from his finding, reading and heeding the book of the Scotch physician, George Cheyne, whose title was *Essay of Health and Long Life*. It was "directed chiefly to studious and sedentary persons," and advocated temperance and exercise.⁴

Impecunious, he was unable to visit home; saw any of his folks rarely; and cried for joy at the prospect of seeing his mother and her brother Samuel from India.⁵ Like most students or folk away from home, he missed the sustenance of letters, but Emilia,⁶ Susanna or Hetty did not write him. His father wrote at times: his mother did so quite often, and some of those letters have survived.

Judging from his academic and scholarly achievements, the student was dominant in these years. Yet even in his own writings little is said of this prime pursuit of college life. One can estimate his application to his studies by a characterization of his life there when, in 1770, he wrote of it: "When I was at Oxford, and lived like a hermit."⁷

Religious concerns were not neglected. What these were, and what attention he gave them, are given by him in this paragraph:

"Being removed to the University for five years, I still said my prayers both in public and in private, and read, with the Scriptures, several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some or other known sin: indeed, with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the Holy Communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against that little light I had; unless by those transient fits of what many divines taught me to call repentance."⁸

What he wrote of his religious life at Charterhouse and this disclose likenesses: private prayer, public prayer, church attendance, Scripture reading, ignorance of inward holiness, and sinning contentedly against the "little light" he had.

There are important differences. Hitherto, he has read the Bible. Now he is studying it, particularly the New Testament—an emphasis which indicates a more or less definite knowledge that it held what he ought to know. Moreover, he is reading books bearing upon New Testament interpretation, written by "many divines." This delving into the Bible is the first religious activity he himself initiated which has the nature of a seeking. A questing began here.

Another difference is the beginning of inner disturbances of soul. "Short struggles" and "transient fits," he named them. His adjectives stress their brevity, but their transiency does not negate their occurrence. These will continue and intensify for the next fourteen years.

For all servants of Christ and for all seekers of Him, there is guidance and encouragement in John Wesley's admission that between his soul-struggles and his receptions of the Sacrament of Communion there was a definite relation! That relation was one of cause and effect. The latter was twofold: two soul-storms, the Sacrament aroused in him—one before it; the other, after it. He does not specify what it was in the Communion which disturbed him. Inasmuch as he mentions this spiritual turbulence as the only intermission in his steady contentedness in known sin, the plain inference is the Sacrament passed judgment upon him, raising guilt in his soul. Apparently, these perturbations brought no continuing alteration, but they did keep a certain something alive.

Had he had his choice, he very likely would have included Communion among his negligences. This he could not do in honesty, since university regulation required student attendance at the Sacrament thrice yearly. John Wesley's receiving Communion, therefore, was motivated partly by honest obedience to regulation: and the Wesley children had learned to obey. Here, then, is this significant fact: the first religious soul-stirrings of John Wesley came in relation to an exercise he was required to do. Apparent in this is the value of a proper authoritarian discipline to an admitted formal, sinning and unawakened church member. There is, too, proof that the Lord, through His ordained means, can and does convey His awakening grace. Beneath his dominant complacency in acknowledged sin, there is moving a deeper tide.

What composed that tide appears in his own account of it in his *Journal*.⁹ It so reads:

"When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same time,¹⁰ the providence of God directing me to Kempis' *Christian Pattern*, I began to see, that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, very angry at Kempis for being too strict; though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before; and meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much, and living so good a life,' I doubted not but I was a good Christian."

Written some fifteen or more years after its swellings began, such is John Wesley's detail of the tide upon which he was being carried. It is a sketch only. Still it is enough to communicate the fact that here are matters of vast significance in the religious quest of John Wesley. Since this is true, it will be necessary to fill in the sketch with other pertinent data and, in so doing, to observe as far as possible the chronology.

Before beginning such observation, it is essential to bear in mind the predominating truth of John Simon's judgment: "It is impossible to understand John Wesley's life if we refuse to recognize that it was

under the control of God. . . . It was possible for him to make 'the great refusal,' and surrender the enduring glory of the man who does God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. Those who watch him in the days of hesitation in Oxford are aware of the peril of his reluctance. It is with intense interest they see him slowly turning his feet into the hard path he had to travel."¹¹

1721. Having entered Oxford the previous year, "as the year 1721 drew to a close,"¹² something happened which brought John Wesley to order his student life for 1722 according to a plan—"a plan of study for the new year . . . a timetable of work and correspondence."¹³ "Mr. Curnock, searching the pages of the little notebook in which Wesley's first Oxford *Diary* is contained, found an entry which seemed to indicate that at the close of 1721, when Wesley was in his nineteenth year, something occurred which induced him to take a more serious view of life. The moving cause cannot be discovered, but it is clear he then formed and carried out a plan for the regulation of his work."

This might have been done under the influence of his grandfather John Westley who, also as a schoolboy, kept a diary of God's dealings with him. The little book he used for this record came in some unknown way into the possession of the grandson,¹⁴ who wrote his "plan" over the earlier script of the grandfather. If not the beginning, this is an intimation of John's *Diary*, "begun before reading Jeremy Taylor"¹⁵ and enlarged into the "more exact account" of the *Journal*.¹⁶

It is significant to notice that here is the first evidence of the ordered scheduled life which characterized all John Wesley's after years and which gave his Church its name.

Germane to Wesley's quest is that the first known change of his own in his life was from an unordered to an ordered form of living. That living, since he was a student, involved study only. Naught appears to have been done about religious matters. So run university days for the ensuing three years.

1724. Then there occurs another change. His budgeting his time in 1721, John Simon says "was only a first stroke in Wesley's battle for self-mastery."¹⁷ Three years later, in 1724, he was compelled to decide what his future work would be.

There is no doubt that his alternatives were scholarship or religion. Even less doubt is there that, until late in 1724, his preference and

desire were for a life of scholarship at Oxford. How strong his preference and desire for that kind of a life will be seen in his excursion into mysticism. Simon's summary is: "The spell of Oxford was on him. . . . It is certain that, at the outset of his university career, he had no intention of becoming a clergyman."¹⁸

Then there came a change, which Wesley stated in this detached language: "When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders." Clearly, this is a reversal from scholarship to religion. It occurred "towards the end of 1724."¹⁹

What made the change? John said, pressure from his father. However, the available evidence modifies his record. Its testimony follows: "I took some pains, a year or two since, in drawing up some advices to Mr. Hoole's brother, then to be my curate at Epworth, before his ordination, which may not be unuseful to you; therefore, I will send them shortly to your brother Sam for you: but you must return me them again, I having no copy; and pray let none but yourself see them." This is hardly pressure.

Sometime before or around August 19, 1724, John graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.²⁰ September 10 of this year, his mother wrote in a letter to him: "I heartily wish you were in orders, and could come and serve as one of your father's curates."²¹ This is the earliest available reference to Wesley's becoming a minister.

His next letter to her was written on November 1. It is only newsy and has no reference to orders. By November 24, she has three more letters from him,²² which it seems are lost. Her letter to him of that date has no shred of reference to orders, but she asked only for "some more verses on any, but rather on a religious subject."

Sometime previous to January 26, 1725, John informed his father of his considering entry into holy orders. Here is the first notice of the matter from John himself. January 26, 1725, Samuel Wesley, Sr., wrote his son:

As to what you mention of entering into Holy Orders, it is indeed a great work, and I am pleased to find you think so. As to the motive you take notice of, my thoughts are; if it is no harm to desire getting into that office, even as Eli's sons, *to eat a piece of bread*; yet certainly a desire and intention to lead a stricter life, and a belief that one should do so, is a better reason; though this should, by all means, be begun before, or ten to one it will deceive us after-

wards. But if a man be unwilling and undesirous to enter into orders, it is easy to guess whether he can say so much as, with common honesty, that he trusts he is 'moved to it by the Holy Ghost.' But the principal spring and motive to which all the former should be secondary, must certainly be the glory of God, and the service of His Church in the edification of our neighbor. And woe to him who, with any meaner view, attempts so sacred a work.²³

Alongside the father's letter, place the mother's, written on February 23:

Dear Jacky, The alteration of your temper here occasioned me much speculation. I . . . hope it may proceed from the operation of God's Holy Spirit. . . . In good earnest, resolve to make religion the business of your life. . . . I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation; that is, whether you are in a state of faith and repentance or not, which you know are the conditions of the gospel covenant on our part. . . .

Now I mention this, it calls to mind your letter to your father about taking orders. I was much pleased with it, and liked the proposal well; but it is an unhappiness peculiar to our family, that your father and I seldom think alike. I approve the disposition of your mind, and think the sooner you are a deacon the better; because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity. . . . Mr. Wesley differs from me, and would engage you, I believe, in critical learning. . . . I earnestly pray God to avert that great evil from you of engaging in trifling studies to the neglect of such as are absolutely necessary. I dare advise nothing: God Almighty direct and bless you.²⁴

By these two letters, the subject of John Wesley's becoming a minister is illuminated greatly. They have likenesses and differences.

Both parents exalt the religious calling and work. Each is "pleased" with the son's proposal. About the rest, they differ in their specific emphases only: the father referred to the work itself primarily; the mother, to the man who proposes to undertake it.

It is clear that John wrote his father about motives for entering orders, writing of material support, stricter religious living as aided thereby, a belief one should be a minister, the leading of the Holy Spirit, the

glory of God, and the serving His Church through serving one's fellows. Father Samuel acknowledged the place of material support; warned that, unless stricter living were begun before the decision to enter orders, doing so afterwards would discover to such a person his self-deceit; and rated higher personal conviction, the call of the Spirit, the glorification of God, and edification of men through the Church. Less than these will end only in woe.

The mother's letter brought into the open the undercurrent of the father's letter, which consisted in a desire, secret and suppressed, that John would become a scholar. She knew, apparently, that John strongly wished so to devote his life, in view of which fact his proposal to enter orders caused her "much speculation." Her quandary is about the motive for his change. That motive, she hoped, was the moving upon him of the Holy Spirit. Whatever it might be, she urged him to "make religion the business of his life" and to begin with ascertaining by earnest self-examination whether or not he was in a state of "faith and repentance" and, therefore, had a "reasonable hope of salvation."

She approves his proposal to enter orders, "because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity." It alone is "absolutely necessary." Finally, having given her judgment, she allowed him to stand upon his own feet and decide: "I dare advise nothing: God Almighty direct and bless you."

After reading these letters, one wonders just why John wrote that his father "pressed" him to seek ordination; for the father's letter has scarce any evidence of pressure. The contrary appears to be its temper. Writing to John, on May 10, 1725, Samuel, Sr., stated, "I did what I could that you might have been in orders this Trinity."²⁵ Since Trinity Sunday is the eighth Sunday after Easter; since Samuel Wesley, Sr., had become vicar of Wroote in late April or early May; and since, in the previous September, Susannah had expressed a wish that John was in orders, so that he might become curate to his father, pressure pervaded the Wesley family. About it the mother was most outspoken: the father, most active: the son, most silent. As far as John's letters of these months show, he paid little heed to any curacy. Nine years later, in 1734, when ailing Samuel, Sr.,²⁶ besought John to take charge of his parish, he wrote his father on December 10 a long refusal letter of twenty-six paragraphs. Might not John Wesley, back in 1725, have sensed he had another field for his work? If Samuel, Sr., exerted "pressure" in 1725, it does not appear from extant letters.

Ere leaving this subject of orders, attention should be given the fore-

gleams in Susannah's letter of inner, personal and knowable religious experience. In this area, her son will become foremost in his experience, in his teaching and in his administration. Here, in February, 1725, is the first recorded reference to it. Its framework is inadequate. By self-examination, one discovers whether or not he is "in a state of faith and repentance" by which state one can know he has a "reasonable hope of salvation." Though this be inadequate, it is pointing in the right direction. Susannah will not come to personal assurance until 1742. Very soon, her son will be glimpsing more than a "reasonable hope."

CHAPTER FIVE

"I BEGAN TO SEE," wrote John Wesley—four significant words which raise two questions: How did he come to see? And, what did he see? Chronologically, the answers to these questions were part of the period involved in the previous subject of Wesley's taking holy orders. Their field is the more personal and deeper area of Wesley's religious status.

"I Daniel understood by books,"¹ wrote that prophet, and the same media began John Wesley's seeing. Three books had permanent effect upon him, beginning now: *Holy Living and Dying*, by Jeremy Taylor; the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis; and William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. The first two were old; the third, new. The wide and deep effects of the first two upon John Wesley in his quest require here somewhat detailed presentation. The third came later. These must be examined. First, Taylor's.²

Jeremy Taylor was born at Cambridge, England, in 1613, and died August 13, 1667. His father was a barber, an occupation which then comprised also those of apothecary and of surgeon. The son soon came under the notice, liking and care of the aristocratic circles of church and state, amongst which he spent very much of his life. When only twenty years of age, his preaching for a friend at St. Paul's drew the high favor of William Laud, whose only reason for not advancing him then was his youth. In 1638, he took holy orders: and spent his life in the church, both in England and in Ireland. Throughout his ministry, he was the focus of much of the Catholic-Presbyterian controversy in England. Upon this matter, numbers of his many writings were written.

Of his writings, the ones pertinent here were his *Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, published in 1650 and 1651. John Wesley referred to them thus: "of *Living and Dying*."

Wesley appears to have given attention to the first only. Its four chapters bear the headings: "Consideration of the General Instruments and Means serving to a Holy Life, by way of Introduction"; "Of Christian

Sobriety"; "Of Christian Justice"; and "Of Christian Religion." Each chapter has three to ten "sections."

Taylor's first chapter, and its first section, has the caption: "The first general instrument of holy living—Care of our Time."

Therein, Wesley read: "God hath given to man a short time here upon earth, and yet upon this short time eternity depends: but so, that for every hour of our life (after we are persons capable of laws, and know good from evil) we must give account to the great Judge of men and angels. . . . What we sow in the minutes and spare portions of a few years, grows up to crowns and sceptres in a happy and glorious eternity. . . . He that is choice of his time, will be also choice of his company, and choice of his actions, lest the first engage him in vanity and loss; and the latter by being criminal, be a throwing his time and himself away, and a going back in the accounts of eternity."³

Taylor concludes: "Idleness is the greatest prodigality in the world. . . ."⁴

Then follow his "Rules for employing our time." They number twenty-three, a few samples of which are these.

1. In the morning, when you awake, accustom yourself to think first upon God. . . .
5. Avoid the company of drunkards and busybodies, and all such as are apt to talk much to little purpose: for no man can be provident of his time, that is not prudent in the choice of his company. . . .
6. Never talk with any man, or undertake any trifling employment, merely to pass the time away. . . .
8. A man may be very idle busy. . . .
16. Let not your recreations be lavish spenders of your time; but choose such which are healthful, short, transient, recreative, and apt to refresh you. . . .
17. Set apart some portions of every day for more solemn devotion and religious employment, which be severe in observing. . . .
22. We shall be much assisted, and we shall find the work more easy, if, before we sleep, every night we examine the actions of the past day with a particular scrutiny. . . .⁵

John Wesley's reading such advices in 1725 brought him then to this practice: "It was in pursuance of an advice given by Dr. Taylor, in his *Rules for Holy Living and Dying*, that about fifteen years ago, I began

to take a more exact account than I had done before, of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I had employed every hour."⁶

The second effect of Taylor's book upon John Wesley was in what the Bishop wrote upon intention. By this, he meant one's proposed end of every action—"In every action reflect upon the end." The proper end is the glory of God—"We should design God's glory in every action we do"; therefore, "begin every action in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Begin every act with a prayer for God's blessing upon it and His sanctification of it. Make one's acts an offering to God."

Such procedure constituted "Purity of Intention" to Taylor. It was composed of these elements: a proper share of care to both civil and religious concerns, the former getting less than the latter; steadfast purpose amidst the "opinion and censures of men"; the matching one's private with his public piety; love of virtue "for God's sake and its own"; and the despising the "world and all its appendant vanities." Jeremy Taylor's summary figure is: "Holy intention is to the actions of a man that which the soul is to the body."⁷

The plain practicality of these advices is evident. The first is an over-all application of Jesus' principle by which a Christian was to determine his political and religious administrations of his income—"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."⁸ Taylor gave major place to the latter. The second counseled steadiness of purpose amidst the criticisms of men. The next would nullify a common and continuing objection to the lives of some professed followers of Christ. Sturdy independence and stability shout from each phrase of the fourth advice. The overbalance of the last upsets or disturbs the equilibrium of Taylor's first guide rule, but certainly aims to correct the bias of human nature.

How much of this sank at the time into the soul-deeps of university-student Wesley, though not specified here in his own words, is witnessed unmistakably in all his active life.

His matured estimate is found in a letter of forty years later, written in answer to the criticism of his teaching about Christian perfection by John Newton, one of his preachers. Among other items, Newton inquired how Wesley came to his same idea of such perfection. He received this answer:

"How came that opinion into my mind? I will tell you with all simplicity. In 1725 I met with Bishop Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*.

I was struck particularly with the chapter upon intention,⁹ and felt a fixed intention to give myself up to God. In this I was much confirmed soon after by the Christian pattern, and longed to give God all my heart. This is just what I mean by perfection now. I sought after it from that hour."

What he meant by his phrase, "struck particularly," one can measure by the continuing primacy and power, witnessed in this letter, of intention. His words have the clarity, perspective and assurance of forty years.

Along with this certainty of John Wesley's upon Taylor's teaching about intention, Taylor raised doubts in John about some of his other teachings; for on June 28th of 1725, he wrote to his mother: "I have ventured to trouble you once more on a more dubious occasion."¹⁰

This doubt arose from a conversation he had with a woman "of good judgment" who said "she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor . . . that he almost put her out of her senses when she was fifteen or sixteen years old; because he seemed to exclude all from being in a way of salvation who did not come up to his rules, some of which were altogether impracticable."¹¹ So he synopsized her criticism.

Her comments either generated doubt in Wesley or stirred into life those already in his mind. Uncertainty involved Taylor's position on humility, predestination, repentance. The discussion of these with his mother expanded to include forgiveness, assurance of it, faith, reason and revelation.

Chapter Two of *Holy Living* has the title "Of Christian Sobriety." Its six sections are: Of Sobriety in the general sense: Of Temperance in eating and drinking; Of Chastity; Of Humility; Of Modesty; and Of Contentedness in all estates and accidents.

The fourth seems to have struck John Wesley very forcibly. Taylor began with this estimate of humility. "Humility is the great ornament and jewel of Christian religion; that, whereby it is distinguished from all the wisdom of the world: it not having been taught by the wise men of the Gentiles, but first put into a discipline, and made part of a religion, by our Lord Jesus Christ, who propounded himself inimitable by His disciples so signally in nothing as in the twin-sisters of meekness and humility. Learn of me, for I am meek and humble; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For all the world, all that we are, and all that we have, our bodies and our souls, our actions and our sufferings, our conditions at home,

our accidents abroad, our many sins and our seldom virtues, are as so many arguments to make our souls dwell low in the deep valleys of humility."

Then, under the subhead, "Arguments against Pride by way of consideration," Taylor lists nine items. Next, under "Acts as Offices of Humility" he lists nineteen items. There follow fourteen "Means and Exercises for obtaining and increasing the Grace of Humility." Finally, and summarily, there are seventeen "Signs of Humility." The Bishop certainly was thorough.

Judging from the detail he wrote to his mother, John was smitten hard by the "Acts as Offices of Humility." Of these, his letter to her specified these five:

"Love to be little esteemed, and be content to be slighted or undervalued." Act 4.

"Take no content in praise when it is offered thee." Act 9.

"Please not thyself when disgraced by supposing thou didst deserve praise though they understood thee not or enviously detracted from thee." Act 11.

"We must be sure in some sense or other to think ourselves the worst in every company where we come." Act 15.

"Give God thanks for every weakness, deformity, or imperfection, and accept it as a favour and grace, an instrument to resist pride." Act 17.

Lest anyone regard these "Acts" as the unrealistic imaginings of a man theorizing in cloistered security, it must be said that a brief scanning of Taylor's life shows them to be the refined gold from the furnace of persecution and prison.

It is to be noted that these items, except the fifth, refer to humility. They do not refer to humility towards God; they do refer to humility with reference to men. It is this which stirred doubts in John Wesley. Act 15 did so especially; for upon it alone he made definite comment in his letter to his mother.

Ere considering this epistolary discussion, understanding of John Wesley and fairness to Jeremy Taylor require noting what the Bishop wrote but the student did not quote. Taylor's given paragraph held also this:

"Never compare thyself with others, unless it be to advance them

and to depress thyself. To which purpose, we must be sure in some sense or other to think ourselves the worst in every company. . . . For the humble man observes their good, and reflects only upon his own vileness. . . . So St. Paul reckoned himself the chiefest of sinners. . . . But this rule is to be used with caution; that though it be good always to think meanest of ourselves, yet it is not ever safe to speak it. . . . But if thou preservest thy thoughts and opinions of thyself truly humble, you may with safety give God thanks in public for that good which cannot, or ought not, to be concealed."

It is very likely Wesley read these sentences. It is certain he failed to appreciate Taylor's two significant qualifications of Act 15. His omission of these might mean he now was proud of his pride to the point of touchiness. Still, he was forced to doubt whatever non-humble temper he previously had had. Moreover, he was concerned enough to re-examine himself.

He wrote to his mother on June 18th. Upon it, she wrote the note: "Jacky's Letter, Humility." July 21st, she replied: "Humility is the mean between pride, as an overvaluing ourselves on one side, and a base abject temper on the other. It consists in an habitual disposition to think meanly of ourselves; which disposition is wrought in us by a true knowledge of God; His supreme essential glory, His absolute immense perfection of being; and a just sense of our dependence upon Him; together with a consciousness of our present infirmities and frailties. . . ." ¹²

She missed the point of her son's disturbance. Her thought refers the origin and character of humility to God, in which case she properly understood humility as "an habitual disposition to think meanly of ourselves." Taylor, however, and her son also understood it as any man's relation to other persons.

John lost no time in answering his mother—a fact which indicates the importance of the matter to him. July 29th, he acknowledged her "thoughts" upon Taylor; wrote nothing of her interpretation of humility; but, having no doubt continued to ponder the subject, gave her his present understanding of it. Stating that Taylor seemed not "sufficiently to clear" the subject, he presents his own clarification by distinguishing between absolute and comparative humility.

"As to absolute humility," he wrote, "(if I may venture to make a distinction, which I don't remember to have seen in any author), consisting in a mean opinion of ourselves, considered simply or with respect to God alone, I can readily join with his opinion. But I am more uncer-

tain as to comparative, if I may so term it; and think some plausible reasons may be alleged to show it is not in our power, and consequently not a virtue, to think ourselves the worst in every company. . . .

"If a true knowledge of God be necessary to absolute humility, a true knowledge of our neighbors should be necessary to comparative. But to judge oneself the worst of all men implies a want of such knowledge. No knowledge can be, where there is not certain evidence; which we have not, whether we compare ourselves with acquaintances or strangers. In the one case, we have only imperfect evidence, unless we can see through the heart and reins; in the other, we have none at all."¹³

Clear it is, that mother and son understand humility as a matter of reference—to God, to others. The mother treated only of the first. The son agreed wholly with her but distinguished sharply between one's humility before God and that before men. What Taylor said of this second reference troubled John. He accepted her thesis, that true knowledge must precede humility, but he applied it to the "comparative" or the human reference—that is, humility before men. Men, he divided into two groups: strangers, or people one does not know or see, and one's acquaintances. Of strangers one has no knowledge of at all; and, therefore, humility does not actually apply. Acquaintances are known imperfectly. Therefore, humility, as Taylor understood it, could be but imperfect at the least; at the most, it was "not in one's power, and consequently not a virtue."

All this is logical enough and highly intellectual—quite ruthlessly so. About it there is a smack of the smart. Yet it discloses a willingness to hearken to age and experience; but discloses also a determination and an ability to grasp, to clarify, to broaden and to perfect further the teaching of a past master and of a present mother. The eaglet is using his own wings and seeking and selecting his own sustenance.

One more insight into John Wesley is recorded in this letter of July 29, 1725. Referring to his description of comparative humility, he said: "This kind of humility can never be well-pleasing to God, since it does not flow from faith, without which it is impossible to please Him."

Probably, Wesley is basing his assertion on the final clause of Romans 14:23, "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."¹⁴ What is significant here in these June and July letters are the first outreaches of John Wesley into the area of faith. He moves outside the human and beyond reason. Faith is related to God and is made a dynamic exclusively its own. About faith, he will have yet a vast deal to learn, but he will

learn it quite thoroughly. At this time, his reference to it is somewhat abrupt, detached, lugged in and inadequate. Nonetheless, it is here. In his quest and in his subsequent work, it will have an expanding and an enduring place. His first relation of it is to his attitude in receiving the sacrament and to his understanding of humility.

This discussion by letter of humility ended with Susannah's letter of August 18th: "You say that I have obliged you by sending my thoughts of humility, and yet you do not seem to regard them in the least; but still dwell on that single point in Dr. Taylor, of thinking ourselves the worst in every company; though the necessity of thinking so is not inferred from my definition . . . you will have the virtue consist in thinking meanly of ourselves: I, in an habitual disposition to think meanly of ourselves . . . either in relation to God, ourselves, or our neighbor; which renders your distinction of absolute and comparative humility perfectly needless.

"We may in many instances think very meanly of ourselves without being humble; nay, sometimes our very pride will lead us to condemn ourselves; as when we have said or done anything which lessens that esteem of men we earnestly covet. As to what you call absolute humility, with respect to God, what great matter is there in it? Had we only a mere speculative knowledge of that awful Being, and only considered Him as the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe; yet since that first notion of Him implies that He is a God of absolute and infinite affection and glory, we cannot contemplate that glory, or conceive Him present, without the most exquisite diminution of ourselves before Him."¹⁵

There is a bit of petulance in the beginning of this quotation; and, except for the disparity between the two phrases, "thinking meanly" and "an habitual disposition to think meanly," there is a sameness of position. Both the fretful spirit and the unaltered understanding are overlaid by a succinct presentation of the grandeur of the Creator whose closing application presents the deepest humility before Him as a creature's high privilege and becoming response.

The attention given humility by John Wesley has a twofold importance. First, he was a proud young man. His *Diary* for December 1 of this same year recorded a confession of sin and lists certain sins he resolves to attend unto, one of which is this: "Pride of my parts or holiness"—that is, of his talents, attainments, and his purity or rectitude. After the ensuing Christmas season, a self-examination lists among

others these sins and their remedies: "In devotion? Prayer and humility. Pride? Consider death, the Scriptures."¹⁶ No wonder Taylor stung him!

Second, here at the alpha of his quest, he confronts, however inadequately, one of the indispensable approaches to vital knowledge of God. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," both Peter and James declare.¹⁷ The writer of Psalm 25 bore witness: "Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way."¹⁸ With a reversed reference, Christ, the Teacher, joined learning and meekness in His statement of his pedagogical qualifications, saying, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart."¹⁹

Surely, therefore, John Wesley is confronted by the only door to the things of the Gospel. As yet, there is no espousal of humility nor adequate rejection of pride. The leaven is in the lump and is working, as his *Diary* tells; it will continue to do so and, in November, 1730, he will exclaim in dejection, "I am sick of pride; it quite weighs my spirits down."²⁰

"What, then, shall I say of predestination?" John wrote also to his mother in his letter of July 29th, 1725. He continued: "An everlasting purpose of God to deliver some from damnation does, I suppose, exclude all from that deliverance who are not chosen. And if it was inevitably decreed from eternity that such a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none beside them, a vast majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as a possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either the Divine Justice or Mercy? Is it just to punish man for crimes he could not but commit? How is man, if necessarily determined to one way of acting, a free agent? To lie under either a physical or moral necessity is entirely repugnant to human liberty. But that God should be the author of sin and injustice (which must, I think, be the consequence of maintaining this opinion) is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfections.

"I used to think that the difficulty of predestination might be solved by supposing that it was indeed decreed from eternity that a remnant should be elected, but that it was in every man's power to be of that remnant. But the words of that article will not bear that sense. I see no other way but to allow that some may be saved who were not always of the number to be elected."

His letter concluded with the request: "Your sentiments on this point, especially where I am in error, will much oblige and I hope improve your dutiful son."

Her reply of August 18th contains these pertinent paragraphs:

"I have often wondered that men should be so vain as to amuse themselves with searching into the decree of God, which no human wit can fathom. . . . But since I find you have some scruples concerning our article, of predestination, I will tell you my thoughts of the matter.

"The doctrine of predestination, as maintained by the rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred, because it directly charges the most high God with being the author of sin. I think you reason well and justly against it. . . .

"I firmly believe that God, from eternity, has elected some to eternal life; but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded on His foreknowledge, according to Romans VIII, 29, 30. Whom, in His eternal prescience, God saw would make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, He did predestinate and adopt for His children. And that they may be conformed to the image of His only Son, He calls them to Himself, through the preaching of the Gospel, and, internally, by His Holy Spirit; which call they obeying, repenting of their sins and believing in the Lord Jesus, He justifies them, absolves them from the guilt of all their sins, and acknowledges them as just and righteous persons, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. And having thus justified, He receives them to glory—to heaven."²¹

Before discussing these paragraphs, one must reckon with the position of Jeremy Taylor upon the subject; for their presence in John's letter, in conjunction with the effects upon him of Taylor's *Holy Living*, is evidence that what that author wrote about it was the spur to Wesley's critique.

Turning to Jeremy Taylor, then, one notes that he wrote very little about predestination. That he should have done so was all that was needful in his day, when this doctrine was quite generally accepted. He himself accepted it in a way. His understanding of it is found in his dedication of *Holy Living* in this form:

"That man does certainly belong to God, who: 1. believes and is baptized into all the articles of the Christian faith, and studies to improve his knowledge in the matters of God, so as may best make him to live a holy life. 2. He that, in obedience to Christ, worships God diligently, frequently, and constantly, with natural religion, that is of prayer,

praises, and thanksgiving. 3. He that takes all opportunities to remember Christ's death by frequent sacrament (as it can be had), or else by inward acts of understanding, will, and memory (which is the spiritual communion) supplies the want of external rite. 4. He that lives chastely; 5. And is merciful; 6. And despises the world, using it as a man, but never suffering it to rifle a duty; 7. And is just in his dealings and diligent in his calling. 8. He that is humble in spirit. 9. And obedient to government. 10. And content in his fortune and employment. 11. He that does his duty because he loves God; 12. And especially, if after all this, he be afflicted, and patient, or prepared to suffer affliction for the cause of God: the man that hath these twelve signs of grace and predestination, does as certainly belong to God, and is His son, as surely as he is His creature."²²

Discussion of these understandings of predestination tempt one to lengthy exposition. It is necessary to see only the pattern of each and to stress that of John Wesley. That pattern is this: all three do not discard, in any thorough sense, current acceptance and understanding of predestination; but also, all three are sure something is wrong in it and attempt to rectify such wrong. How did they do so?

Jeremy Taylor did so by by-passing the heart of the subject. His opening and closing sentences appear to challenge a past and current understanding of predestination, but he did not discuss the subject. His *Holy Living* has a section entitled: "Of the Christian Religion," in which one would expect justifiably to find a discussion or presentation of predestination, but it is not mentioned. His only reference to it is in the quoted paragraph.

Therein he lists the creed, spirit, piety and ethical conduct of a Christian and blankets all with the designation: "Signs of grace and predestination." Did he mean no predestinated person was excused from these? Was he quietly suggesting there was no predestination apart from these things, and thereby implying there was no such thing as an inescapable certainty of final salvation, irrespective of what such supposedly predestined people did or were? And is he not declaring adroitly that the obvious attainment of the listed items by anyone who wills to have them quietly and effectively disposes of any need or possibility of any such status under God as predestination? The whole drive of the Bishop's book is an affirmative reply. Hence, he by-passes the subject only in avoiding blunt, open and belligerent opposition.

Susannah Wesley's rectification is this: God endowed all men with

certain powers. Men so endowed fall into two classes. The one comprises those who will misuse those powers. About them, she said not a word, implying that God dismisses them. God saw that others would use their endowed powers properly. These he predestined and adopted. Apparently, she understood this group's proper use of their powers as their accepting and following the Gospel, from the first call of God until their admission into final glory. She limits predestination to a partial number of people who, by Divine foreknowledge, will act in a certain way. Thus, the repair of predestination is attempted, but the old garment is rent by the new patch.

John Wesley's clause, "I used to think," informs us that previous to his reading Jeremy Taylor he had pondered predestination with this result: God's decree involved a "remnant"—that is, the smaller number of mankind: but every man could become one of this number. His remnant is similar to his mother's idea of the limited predestinated group. Yet even then he could not bear, subconsciously perhaps, the thought of exclusion of any from the possibility of redemption: "every man" could enter the remnant. There appears now, previous to 1725, the seed of his later famous outreach—"The field is the world"; and to Saint John's *pas ho* (πᾶς ὁ), "Whosoever."

How he came to his idea of the possibility of every man's entering the remnant is not stated. Now, reading Taylor raises the matter again, and his mother's letter provides the springboard for a further advance. Taylor and Susannah confined themselves to those whom predestination saved. John began with those whom predestination damned.

If these, by God's immutable decree, are born to sin; if their acts are fixed—that is, they could not but commit their crimes and were powerless to avoid them; and if they are predestined to eternal death for what they could not avoid doing, where is the justice, the mercy of God? Where is the freedom of man? Where is man's responsibility? Predestination, to John Wesley, therefore, was a "contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfections," and was "entirely repugnant to human liberty."

John Wesley here faces predestination squarely. He made no attempt to relate utter incongruities or to bridge the unbridgeable. He put side by side the God of justice and mercy and the predestined damned; saw the senseless, blasphemous character attributed by predestination to God; discerned the brutally arbitrary rejection of the helpless lost; and revolted from the whole. There is no attempt to fill an old wineskin. The new wineskin is at hand.

"Your young men shall see visions," declared Joel. Here John Wesley, aged twenty-two, has seen through predestination unto God's open door for all. It is a huge advance. What his insight and stride would mean for Calvinism, he cannot know now. One writer's estimate of its effect is, "John Wesley killed Calvinism."²⁸ Too broad is this assertion; for some things in Calvin's teaching Wesley never abandoned: but, as far as predestination is concerned, he did kill it for Methodism.

What his stand upon predestination will mean for him himself, he cannot know now. Nor can he measure the lengthy and arduous battle he will be summoned to fight, even against one of his foremost friends and helpers, George Whitefield. He will never retreat. Here, in this first year of his quest, the sword for this struggle is in his hand. To alter the figure: he has opened the door to the "Whosoever," whose hinges were the justice and mercy of God. That it would be indeed an "effectual" door is evidenced by the incalculable part it had in Methodism's victories of "Free Grace."

Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* stirred John Wesley concerning repentance also—and its concomitants: forgiveness or pardon, and assurance of it.

Until his meeting with Taylor's book, his understanding of divine dealing with human sin is given as follows.

His *Journal's* account thereof during his university years is: "I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some or other known sin; indeed, with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against that little light I had: unless by those transient fits of what many divines taught me to call repentance." From 1738, he thus sees himself in 1725.

Writing to his mother in 1725, he gave her this statement of his hope for forgiveness: "I imagined that when I communicated worthily, i.e., with faith, humility, and thankfulness, my preceding sins were *ipso facto* forgiven me. I mean, so forgiven that, unless I fell into them again, I might be secure of their ever rising in judgment against me at least in the other world. . . ."

The basis of his hope of pardon was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was to be received in faith, humility and with thanksgiving. Such reception automatically made it operative for himself. This effec-

tiveness extended only to those sins committed between any two communions. The pardon thus obtained meant only that these pardoned sins would never appear against him in the Final Judgment—that is, guilt was forgiven and final retribution removed. Lapse into pardoned sin meant past pardoned and present repeated sins would appear against him in Judgment.

Having this credo, he meets Jeremy Taylor. Having impressed Wesley with his understanding of humility, he now affects him by his description of repentance. Taylor's thought appears under these heads: "Of Repentance, Acts and Parts of Repentance, and Motives to Repentance."²⁴ The first two of these contain what John wrote his mother:

"Repentance contains in it all the parts of an holy life from our return to our death.

"A man can have but one proper repentance—viz., when the rite of baptism is verified by God's grace coming upon us and our obedience. After this change, if we ever fall into the contrary state there is no place left for any more repentance.

"A true penitent must all the days of his life pray for pardon and never think the work completed till he dies. Whether God has forgiven us or no we know not, therefore still be sorrowful for ever having sinned."

Judged by his comment, Wesley was disturbed most by the closing sentence of the last item. Upon it, he said to his mother:

"I take the more notice of this last sentence, because it seems to contradict his own words in the next section, when he says that by the Lord's Supper all the members are united to one another and to Christ the head: the Holy Ghost confers on us the graces we pray for, and our souls receive into them the seeds of an immortal nature."²⁵ Now, surely these graces are not of so little force, as that we cannot perceive whether we have them or no; and if we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which He will not do till we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it. If his opinion be true, I must own I have always been in great error. . . . If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent not in joy but fear and trembling; and then undoubtedly in this life WE ARE of all men most miserable! God deliver us from such a fearful expectation as this!"²⁶

This passage sheds light upon what John Wesley had been believing

prior to this June of 1725. He had held some idea of regeneration—that is, a deep and inner change; believed one could be in a “state of salvation”—that is, a broadly comprehensive and acceptable status before God; and he had been certain that this experience and state not merely can but must be known in some “sensible” way. Apparently, these solid Gospel truths had been dormant for some time in Wesley’s mind and soul. Jeremy Taylor’s denial of them arouses his rebellion against such teaching. Thus, Taylor did not communicate these things to Wesley, but he blew them into flame by negating assertion of them as experience and his denial of them as knowable. He did this in two ways: by way of his teaching about repentance, and by his teaching about the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

Wondrously did Taylor describe the powers of repentance. “Repentance, of all things in the world, makes the greatest change: for it changes the whole man from sin to grace, from vicious habits to holy customs, from unchaste bodies to angelical souls, from swine to philosophers, from drunkenness to sober counsels: and God himself, ‘with whom is no variableness or shadow of change,’ is pleased, by descending to our weak understandings, to say, that He changes also upon man’s repentance, that he alters His decrees, revokes His sentence, cancels the bills of accusation, throws the records of shame and sorrow from the court of heaven, and lifts up the sinner from the grave to life, from his prison to a throne, from hell and the guilt of eternal torture, to heaven and to a title to never-ceasing felicities. If we be bound on earth, we shall be bound in heaven: if we be absolved here, we shall be loosed there: if we repent, God will repent, and not send evil upon us, which we had deserved.”²⁷

Here is rhapsody, ecstasy: properly so, for it is solid teaching. Change, as the essence of repentance, is the heart of the New Testament Greek word for it—*metanoia* meaning a change of mind.²⁸ Repentance is a man’s change in himself. It is a change towards God. It changes God from Judge to Saviour. It changes man’s status on earth before God. It opens his blissful status in heaven.

But then Taylor writes this: “A true penitent must, all the days of his life, pray for pardon, and never think the work completed till he dies; not (completed) by any act of his own, by no act of the church, by no forgiveness of the party injured. . . . And whether God hath forgiven us or no, we know not; and all that we have done, is not of sufficient worth to obtain pardon; therefore, still pray, and still be sor-

rowful for ever having done it (sin), and for ever watch against it; and then those beginnings of pardon, which are working all the way, will at last be perfected in the day of the Lord."²⁹

Inasmuch as during the last five years, John Wesley has made more and more of the sacrament of communion in his religious awakening, it is quite consistent that he gave major attention to what Jeremy Taylor taught about it. As descriptive of the operations of the sacrament, the Bishop penned a dozen items³⁰ which the student does not record. Even his paraphrase is inadequate for Taylor's thought and, therefore, it is given more fully here. Of the powers of the communion, he wrote: "I must of necessity mean, that all the benefits of that sacrifice are then conveyed to all that communicate worthily. But if we descend to particulars, then and there the church is nourished in her faith, strengthened in her hope, enlarged in her heart with increasing charity; there all the members of Christ are joined with each other, and all to Christ their head; and we again renew the covenant with God in Jesus Christ, and God seals His part, and we promise for ours, and Christ unites both, and the Holy Ghost signs both in the collation of those graces, which we then pray for, and exercise and receive all at once. There our bodies are nourished with the signs, and our souls with the mystery; our bodies receive into them the seed of an immortal nature, and our souls are joined with Him, who is the first fruits of the resurrection, and never can die."³¹

These fuller details magnify Wesley's wonder how anyone could fail to know by some sensible evidence that such huge effects were wrought within him. Moreover, they arouse equal wonder that Taylor failed to tell of such effects. Or did Taylor know that anyone neglectful of the means could not experience these results and, hence, could neither know them or be told of them? Or did he know those experiencing them would know it without being given a list of evidences? This is not known. It is known that John Wesley, without the experience, reasoned or divined or was inspired to declare that such deep effects both could and must be known by one who is the subject of them.

John Wesley's criticism could have been generated by two of Taylor's clauses: "And God seals his part"; and "The Holy Spirit signs both in the collation of those graces we then pray for, and exercise and receive all at once." The figure of sealing could refer to II Corinthians 1:22, which connects, as do also Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30, an act named sealing with the Holy Spirit. The Greek of the first two passages is

arrabon, meaning a first payment in some transaction or a sign of an engagement to marry. The other clause asserts that worthy communicants are the subjects of a definite visitation of the Holy Spirit, in which visitation these communicants simultaneously pray for, receive and exercise such graces as they seek.

These surely are things by which one knows his approach to God has been acknowledged, met and evidenced.

The New Cleric is hardly fair here to the Noted Bishop. It is likely that Wesley was disheartened and a bit angered by failure to find among Taylor's "Effects of Worthy Communing" any mention, much less promise, of pardon or forgiveness. It is not there. That omission would disturb or slay seeker Wesley, who has been seeking pardon nowhere except in, at, or by communion. So construing communion, he "imagined" his sins pardoned thereby. It is out of this imagined pardon that Jeremy Taylor has shaken John Wesley. He has not disturbed Wesley's theological marrying of sacrament and pardon; but his large, detailed and vivid list of the powers of the sacrament compelled Wesley to see it would be impossible not to know beyond doubt their operation in one's experience. Against them, John's imagined pardon became a pale wraith, unreal and misty.

Having built his hope-house of pardon upon the foundation of worthily communing, and now having seen his superstructure to be, if not hay or stubble, only of word, he has arrived at a "dubious occasion" indeed. About this, he wrote to his mother.

She answered: "There is but one true repentance, for repentance is a state, not a transient act. As a state, repentance "begins in a change of the whole mind from evil to good." After this change, sin repented constitutes "total apostasy."³²

She does not "well understand" Taylor's claim that one cannot know whether or not he is forgiven. If he meant a present certainty which "cannot admit of the least doubt or scruple," Taylor was "infallibly in the right; for such an absolute certainty we can never have till we come to heaven." If Taylor understood one could not have a "reasonable persuasion" of present forgiveness, "he is entirely in the wrong, for such a firm persuasion is actually enjoyed by man in this life."

With her son's joining forgiveness with communing with faith and humility, she agrees entirely.

Finally, her closing paragraph is aimed at his fears and doubts about the hereafter. "If you would be free from fears and doubts concerning

your future happiness, every morning and evening commit your soul to Jesus Christ, in a full faith in His power and will to save you. If you do this seriously and constantly, He will take you under His conduct; He will guide you by His Holy Spirit into the way of truth, and give you strength to walk in it. He will dispose of the events of God's general providence to your spiritual advantage; and if, to keep you humble and more sensible of your dependence on Him, He permit you to fall into lesser sins, be not discouraged; for He will certainly give you repentance, and safely guide you through all the temptations of this world, and, at the last, receive you to Himself to glory."

Several points herein tempt to discussion, but it is necessary to note a few. One is her agreement with John's understanding of the communion's relation to pardon. However, she does not sense that Jeremy Taylor has disturbed profoundly that understanding.

Next, she is more in concord with Taylor's positions upon the nature of repentance and the change it effects. She varies from but leans Taylor-ward in her distinction between absolute knowledge of one's pardon and such assurance as a "reasonable persuasion." In this, too, she fails her son, except in her conviction that a kind of assurance of pardon can be had in this life. To date, son John has had only an imaginary assurance: she wrote of a reasonable one; this, he will come to designate "notional religion," and "idea in the head" but naught in the heart: at Aldersgate, he will experience what now, in 1725, he dimly guesses. Along with her advocating assurance as such persuasion, she counsels morning and evening committal of his soul to Christ's "will and power to save" him.

The strangest and most questionable part of her letter is her belief that God, to keep him humble, will "permit" him "to fall into lesser sins": but also, in such cases, "will certainly give his repentance. . . ." She assumes sin is a necessary root of humility in God's administration of one's life. This rash statement is an attempt to account for some sin or to palliate it by allocating a good intention to God's permission of it. The truth is: moral freedom never requires the actuality of sin but must have always the possibility of it. No such possible sin must become an actual sin, a fact attested by the lives of the majority of mankind.

These permitted cases have appended to them a sort of especially dispensed repentance.

John Wesley's next letter to her has only this reference to what she wrote of Jeremy Taylor's teaching upon repentance: "You have much

obliged me by your thoughts on Dr. Taylor, especially with respect to humility . . ."³³—that is, he made no reply upon this subject. Yet it was upon repentance he wrote most lengthily. Is he tacitly saying he disagrees seriously with her ideas? As far as the records tell, it will be nearly five years before he will again write to her of pardon and assurance.

Their discussion of these weighty means of knowing is more brief than that of the other themes, but this conciseness does not indicate any minor significance.

Their presence appeared in relation to humility. Wesley's July 29th letter to Susannah contained this criticism of comparative humility: "This kind of humility can never be well-pleasing to God, since it does not flow from faith, without which it is impossible to please Him."³⁴ He adds his understanding of faith. "Faith is a species of belief, and belief is defined as 'an assent to a proposition upon rational grounds.' Without rational grounds there is therefore no belief, and consequently no faith. . . . As I understand faith to be an assent to any truth upon rational grounds, I don't think it possible without perjury to swear I believe anything, unless I have rational grounds for my persuasion. . . . I call faith an assent upon rational grounds, because I hold divine testimony to be the most reasonable of all evidence whatever. Faith must necessarily at length be resolved into reason. *God* is true; therefore what *He* says is true. He hath said this; therefore, this is true. When any one can bring me more reasonable propositions than these, I am ready to assent to them: till then, it will be highly unreasonable to change my opinion."³⁵

Herein are matters of major significance for anyone seeking an adequate and true grasp of the Gospel and a vital and personal experience of it. They were such matters for John Wesley, Seeker.

The first of them is the fact of Wesley's intellectual approach to faith. It is clear that such an approach was, now, dominant and final with him. It was a fundamental characteristic of his personality. His father acknowledged as much when one day he remarked to his wife, "I believe, sweetheart, our Jack would not attend to the necessities of nature unless he could find a reason for it."³⁶ In 1770, John recalled this same parent's counsel: "Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument. But you will find by-and-by how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason." And John, "older today, a session

wiser,"³⁷ added, "Very little indeed! . . . Passion and prejudice govern the world, only under the name of reason. It is our part, by religion and reason joined, to counteract them all we can."³⁸ This, however, is future; for the present, reason rides in the driver's seat. Intellect is total.

Intellect pontificates, dogmatizes: "Without rational grounds, there is therefore no belief, and consequently no faith." Still, there is a way in which this can be true, that belief and faith have rational bases: it is Isaiah's way—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."³⁹ There is an adequate degree or kind of reason in man's spheres of knowledge, and there is such reason in God's highest sphere of wisdom. This latter, man's limited kind of reason cannot encompass. Paul, too, disillusioned at Athens with the wisdom of man, came to Corinth, not with the "wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world" but with the "wisdom of those that are perfect . . . the wisdom of God in a mystery"—that is: "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."⁴⁰ This change in Paul is the second of the three major changes in his life: that of the Damascus Road; this of the Athens-Corinth Road; and that of the Gentile Road.⁴¹

This transcendent character of the Gospel, John Wesley could not escape altogether. He insisted that faith was an assent upon rational grounds; that it must of necessity be resolved into reason; and that such "rational grounds" were these:

God is true.

Therefore what He says is true.

He hath said this:

Therefore, this is true.

This syllogism is irrefragable. It is as broad as God's word; as sweeping as His Truth. Wesley acknowledged that he challenged any one to present any "more reasonable propositions than these." The devastation it wreaked upon his present understanding of faith, he apparently did not see. Amazing it is to note this. Or should it be amazing? Why didn't John Wesley, brilliant student, near graduate, accepted candidate for the ministry, apply his own final test, "What He (God) says is

true"? Why didn't he take up his Bible and read what truth this true God had spoken? It is fact that in these years, Wesley, though undoubtedly he read his Bible, yet paid it no great attention, nor made little application of it to himself. It will not be until five years later, 1730, that he majors in the Bible, becoming a *homo unius libri*—that is, "to study (comparatively) no book but the Bible."⁴² Here in 1725, he has the correct idea of the proper area of final authority in these matters: but he uses it not. Was he waiting till someone would bring him "more reasonable propositions"? If so, did not his keen mind discern there were no propositions higher than what God spake? Or was he not Paul's "natural man" who can neither receive or know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned?⁴³

Such discernment is not of man's powers but of God's revelation. To this truth, inescapable within the Gospel's logic, the discussion of repentance, forgiveness, assurance and faith, son and mother come: and it is she who put it into the pattern.

August 18th, she wrote him this pertinent paragraph:

"You are somewhat mistaken in your notions of faith. All faith is an assent, but all assent is not faith. Some truths are self-evident, and we assent to them because they are so. Others, after a regular and formal process of reason by way of deduction from some self-evident principle, gain our assent. This is not properly faith but science. Some again we assent to, not because they are self-evident, or because we have attained the knowledge of them in a regular method by a train of arguments; but because they have been revealed to us, either by God or man, and these are the proper objects of faith. The true measure of faith is the authority of the revealer, the weight of which always holds proportion to our conviction of his ability and integrity. Divine faith is an assent to whatever God has revealed, because He has revealed it."⁴⁴

These seven sentences have a crystalline clarity, a granitic solidity and a polished finality. They box the compass for their theme. That theme is: how one comes to a sure knowledge of truth. The path thereto is threefold. Here, we can be concerned about knowledge, lying beyond the range of the self-evident and the rationally attained: we are concerned with such knowledge as can be had only by the disclosure of it to us by a Power, a Person—a Teacher, the Holy Spirit, God—who can and at times does keep it from us but who again reveals it dramatically or unostentatiously, slowly or suddenly. It is always on time and adequate at the revealing time. Divine revealing is the major mode of

knowledge of things spiritual, of the Gospel. Such things "God hath revealed by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,"⁴⁵ declared Paul. And said Jesus, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things."⁴⁶

Her laying upon the mind and heart of her son the only adequate way to satisfying knowledge of things Divine, it is not exaggeration to estimate as one of the greatest services she ever rendered him.

That son John gleamed or realized this is evident from his letter to her of November 22nd: "An assent grounded both on testimony and reason takes in science as well as faith, which is on all hands allowed to be distinct from it. I am, therefore, at length come over entirely to your opinion, that saving faith (including practice) is an assent to what God has revealed because He has revealed it and not because the truth of it may be evinced by reason."⁴⁷

Evaluate this a little. Regarding the fact of God's revealing the reason-transcending nature of it, and its authority, John surrendered to Susannah. However, while he admits faith is distinct from reason as a road to knowing, he keeps the two as the ground of valid testimony. Later, the place here of reason will be taken by the Scriptures.

Of exceeding significance it is to mark his phrases: "Saving faith (including practice)." The adjective "saving" is new here in his writing. What antecedent it might have had is not stated. Was it the gift, between August 18 and November 22, of the revealing God? Whatever be its origin, it is here now: and it will stay, becoming a major part of subsequent Methodist doctrine of the beginning of vital, personal Christian experience.

His added parenthesis is equally significant and enduring in Methodism; for these two phrases, saving faith and practice—that is, faith justifying and then working by love, form the broad pattern of the Gospel and also of Methodism. That now, at the close of 1725, John Wesley should write "and practice" was natural, inasmuch as what of religion he had known since his awakening was composed of naught but pious and devotional practices, personally his own. "Saving faith" is a hopeful seed sown by the Hand Divine and recognized, though but darkly, by the religious genius of the candidate for orders. Why one needs saving, how he is to be saved, the place and reference of faith in this experience, and its indispensable precedence to any totally effective practice—all these he now does not know: but there appears here the first visible bubbling above ground of the stream to come.

"Practice" becomes immediate with John Wesley. The impressions, insights, understandings, which came to him became concrete in stock-taking and regulation. This lifelong policy was the "fulfilment of Jeremy Taylor's advice. . . . The most striking feature of his *Diary* is the dominating influence of 'Rules and Resolutions.'"⁴⁸

He now sets for himself three sets of Rules, composed of: "A General Rule in All Actions of Life"; "General Rules of Employing Time"; and "General Rules as to Intention." To these, additions were made as necessary. He instituted "every Saturday night an inquisition with regard to his own religious experience," and according to what this disclosed to him, he altered his procedure. For example: his self-examination, for December 1, 1725, uncovered this: "Breach of vows: hence, careless of fixing days of mortification. . . . Resolution: To fast, etc., every Wednesday in a month."⁴⁹

CHAPTER SIX

THE SECOND of the two books which strongly moved John Wesley during his university years was Thomas à Kempis' *The Christian Pattern*, or *The Imitation of Christ*.¹ Previous to 1725, his acquaintance with it was slight: he had "frequently seen" it but had "never much looked into it."² Then some weeks ere his twenty-second birthday, June 28, 1725, he began giving it careful attention. To this he was led by these agents: "The providence of God directing me to Kempis' *Christian Pattern*";³ and, "I was lately advised to read Thomas à Kempis over."⁴ Since the first of these two statements was written in 1738, it is a later estimate, and probably a more accurate one, of the book's effect upon him. To urge him to read Kempis again, Providence employed Betty Kirkham. Her brother Robert was a close friend of Wesley's at Oxford: both were ministers' sons. Robert Kirkham's father was rector at Stanton-Harcourt, eight miles northwest of Oxford, and he took his friend thither upon occasional visits.

The indigent but academically brilliant Wesley was very welcome at the Kirkhams'—by the father, mother, brother and daughters Sally and Betty. John's first romance involved Betty. His hesitant withdrawal from it overlaid too much the profound, lifelong power she exerted upon him in her successful plea for him to read Kempis again.⁵

He did so. His own testimony is that it strongly affected him in four ways:

1. It made him "very angry" at Kempis' strictness.
2. It gave him "frequently much sensible comfort."
3. It confirmed what Jeremy Taylor had said of intention.
4. It opened his eyes to the essential inwardness of the Christian faith.

1. "I was very angry at Kempis for being too strict,"⁶ he said. This anger is the second of Wesley's strong feelings in religious concerns.

Previously he had "short struggles" with a sense of guilt. Now, he is downright wrathful.

The occasion of his wrath is Kempis' strictness. What he understood by this is seen in his May 28th letter to his mother: "I can't think when God sent us into the world He had irreversibly decreed that we should be perpetually miserable in it. If it be so, the very endeavour after happiness in this life is a sin, as it is acting in direct contradiction to the very design of our creation. What are become of all the innocent comforts and pleasures of life, if it is the intent of our Creator that we should never taste them? If our taking up the cross implies our bidding adieu to all joy and satisfaction, how is it reconcilable with what Solomon so expressly affirms of religion—that her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace? A fair patrimony, indeed, which Adam has left his sons, if they are destined to be continually wretched! And though heaven is undoubtedly a sufficient recompense for all the afflictions we may or can suffer here, yet I am afraid that argument would make few converts to Christianity, if the yoke were not easy in this life, and such an one as gives rest, at least as much as trouble.

"Another of his tenets, which is indeed a natural consequence of this, is that all mirth is vain and useless, if not sinful. But why, then, does the Psalmist so often exhort us to rejoice in the Lord and tell us it becomes the just to be joyful? I think one could hardly desire a more express text than that in the 68th Psalm, 'Let the righteous rejoice and be glad in the Lord. Let them also be merry and joyful.' And he seems to carry the matter as much too far on the other side afterwards, where he asserts that nothing is an affliction to a good man, and that he ought to thank God even for sending him misery. This, in my opinion, is contrary to God's design in afflicting us; for though He chasteneth those whom He loveth, yet it is in order to humble them: and surely the method Job took in his adversity was very different from this, and yet in all that he sinned not."⁷

Pleasure-pursuing worldlings might be gleeful at finding confirmation of their practices from such a man as John Wesley, and sincere followers of traditional Wesleyan ways might feel their foundations weakened or destroyed. It is very likely that at this time John Wesley himself was more on the side of the lovers of pleasure than on that of the lovers of God. About Kempis' ictus, he wrote his mother, from whom in June he received an answer, followed by one from his father in July.

On June 8th,⁸ Susannah gave him her pertinent comment: "I take Kempis to have been an honest weak man, that had more zeal than

knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure, as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture. Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure? of the innocence of actions? Take this rule: Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind; that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."

On July 14th,⁹ his father wrote him: "As for Thomas à Kempis, all the world are apt to strain either on one side or the other: but, for all that, mortification is still an indispensable Christian duty. The world is a Syren, and we must have a care of her: and if the *young man* will rejoice in his youth, yet let him take care that his joys be innocent; and, in order to this, remember, that for all these things God will bring him into judgment."

Save for Susannah's too low estimate of Kempis, these are wise, solid counsels. They disclose a sound sense of the perils of levity and imply their estimating it as a major danger to their brilliant son. Their reading between the lines of John's letter is substantiated amply by the son's contemporary entries in his recently begun *Diary*.

The father's counsel rests upon the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. He paraphrases verses 16-18 of its seventh chapter and quotes verse 9 of chapter 11 and verse 14 of chapter 12. The first is an advice of moderation—like unto "the golden mean" of the poet Horace. He reminds his son of the final judgment of God upon the deeds of men.

The mother gave him, among other counsels,¹⁰ a rule by which he could determine the use, limit and kind not only of pleasure but also of all else—that is: judge all by their effects upon one's reason, conscience, sense of God, and "relish of Spiritual things." Whatever adversely affects these in anyone, he is to reject. There is here the gist of Jesus' words in The Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew 5: 29-30. In John Wesley's later life, this rule of his mother's will be cardinal and continual in this form: "Love to Christ and a work of grace" are above all in importance and are the final bases of judgment. Whatever doctrine or practice does not decrease these is permissible to a true Christian.¹¹

At the time, Wesley recorded no response to his father's letter, but did so to his mother's, writing that she "satisfied him."¹² This verb should have been changed to "silenced" or to "satisfied for the time."

This alteration is supported by the fact that for the next ten years John Wesley was not too clear upon the limits of Christian liberty. On January 13, 1735, his letter to Susannah has this: "I have had a great deal of conversation lately on the subject of Christian liberty"; and he asked her "thoughts" upon five definitions of it. The fifth contains the phrase, "freedom from restraint."¹³ A month later, he wrote her again about it, specifying five items.¹⁴ It is evident, therefore, that while in 1725 Kempis aroused his wrath, he stirred deeper things in Wesley's mind and life. He saw or sensed their bearing upon his own loved ways; and like most every worldling or self-saving person, he fought back. Here is the first time he does so. It will not be the last, nor the most unreasonable.

To be just to Kempis and true to Wesley, it must be noted the latter's criticism of the former is quite unfair. His understanding of Kempis he puts in these words: "never taste the innocent comforts and pleasures of life . . . Bidding adieu to all joy and satisfaction . . . Heaven as adequate reward would make few converts . . . the yoke must be easy enough to give rest at least as much as trouble. . . . All mirth is vain and useless, if not sinful. . . . One ought to thank God even for sending him misery. . . . God perpetually decreed we should be perpetually miserable in the world."

Had John Wesley cited the particular passages of Kempis in which he found these things, it would aid in one's estimating Wesley himself. Still, how did he come to overlook or to disregard in Kempis the following statements?

"They that follow their senses spot their conscience and lose the grace of God."¹⁵

"This is sovereign wisdom by despising of the world for a man to draw him nearer to the realm of heaven: but for a man to seek perishing riches and to trust in them is vanity."¹⁶

Kempis' chapter, "Of the King's Highway of the Cross," contains this: "In the cross is health, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is the sum of virtue, in the cross is perfection of holiness: there is no health of soul nor hope of everlasting life, but in the cross. Take thy cross therefore and follow Jesu and thou shalt go into life everlasting."¹⁷

Under the title, "That, the World Despised, It is Merry and Sweet to Serve God," Kempis exults: "O the acceptable and jocund service of

God whereby a man is verily made free and holy. O the holy state of religious servage, that maketh man even with angels, pleasant to God, fearful to fiends and commendable to all Christian men. O the service to be embraced and even to be desired, whereby the highest and the sovereign good is deserved and joy gotten that shall dwell without end."¹⁸

Of self-denial, John might have read Kempis' writing: "Son, thou mayest not have perfect liberty unless thou deny thyself utterly. All lovers of themselves, covetous, curious, wanderers about, seeking ever soft things and not those things that are of Jesu Christ but oftentimes feigning and shaping what may not stand. Hold a short and perfect saying—Leave all and thou shalt find all; forsake coveting and thou shalt find rest."¹⁹

Again Kempis has God say: "Some resign, but with some exception, for they trust not fully to God. . . . Folk come not to true liberty of heart, nor to the grace of my jocund familiarity except with whole resignation and daily offering of themselves first being made. . . ."²⁰

Of heaven, Kempis wrote: "One hour shall come when all labour shall cease and all noise; little it is and short, all that passeth with time. Do that thou doest, labour truly in my vineyard; I shall be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourn, keep silence, pray, suffer contrarious manly; for everlasting life is worth all these and much more and much greater battles. . . .

"O if thou hadst seen the perpetual crowns of saints in heaven and in how much glory they joy now that sometimes in this world were deemed contemptible and as folk unworthy to live, forsooth thou wouldst meek thyself unto the earth and wouldst rather be subject under all than to be above one; nor wouldst desire the merry days of this world but rather thou wouldst joy to suffer tribulation for God and wouldst take it as for a great gain to be accounted for naught among men."²¹

Many such quotes from Kempis could be added to these, but they are enough to enable one to see that Wesley's objections lie in a world quite fully apart from that of Kempis. Is it not a too shallow understanding of Wesley to attribute this disparity to his ignorance? In a moment, it will be seen that he did not miss all of Kempis' drive. Therefore, is it not more likely he did grasp or gleam far more of Kempis than he now was willing to acknowledge? Is he not fighting Kempis off by superficial criticism merely to defend himself as he is?

One more than suspects he is now more the "gay collegian" and the proud intellectual than an earnest seeker—or at most an earnest seeker in his own way.

2. Intermittent with stirrings of wrath, Kempis' *Christian Pattern* also gave Wesley "much sensible comfort." This came often, he admitted. He confessed that, until he had read Kempis over again, he had not known any such consolation. Hitherto, he knew of the necessity of such religious experiences. His criticism of Jeremy Taylor's list of the effects of proper communing shows he had a definite conviction the operation of the powers of that means of grace must be experienced consciously and vitally by the communicant. Now, however, he has personal proof of such inner witness. The agent of this is given as his reading of Kempis. What in Kempis communicated these solaces, he does not specify; but their presence in such quotes as those above could be escaped by only the dullest dullard. The nature of them was "sensible"—that is, basically they were of the feelings, in the heart. At the present, these sensible comforts were not continual but they certainly are known, experienced. Here, then, in 1725, are foregleams of Romans 8:16; of May 24, 1738; and of a major experience of subsequent Methodism.

3. Kempis' chapters, Wesley found, supported what Jeremy Taylor had said upon intention. Forty years later, that support he recorded thus: "In 1725, I met with Bishop Taylor's *Rules of Holy Living and Dying*. I was struck particularly with the chapter upon intention, and felt a fixed intention to give myself up to God. In this I was much confirmed soon after by the *Christian Pattern*. . . ."22

The differences in the effects of these two books upon John Wesley were these: Taylor bred in him a strong purpose; Kempis, a longing. Taylor brought Wesley to giving himself to God; Kempis expanded that to his giving God "all" his heart.

This distinction in Wesley's progress is not to be made too sharp or too hard and fast. Writing in 1777,²³ he uses the same language to characterize the impact of Taylor's book upon him. The later and maturer view saw more of a similarity between the results of his reading those authors than at the time he realized. Still, the phrase "all my heart" could indicate what follows in the next section.

4. Kempis' book put into John Wesley's expanding conception of the Christian faith the fact of its primary and essential inwardness. His *Journal's* account, written out in 1738, reports this result: "I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law

extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions." Until reading Kempis, he had understood God's law as concerned with external conduct: words and actions. After reading Kempis, he saw that it included an inward activity—one's thoughts.

Here, too, in that same writing of 1777, is this maturer view: "The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw that giving even all my life to God (supposing it possible to do this, and go no further) would profit me nothing unless I gave him my heart, yea, all my heart to him. I saw that 'simplicity of intention and purity of affection,' one design in all we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed 'the wings of the soul,' without which she can never ascend to the mount of God."

On the essential inwardness of the Christian faith, Kempis wrote much.

"Learn to despise outward things and to turn thee to inward things and thou shalt see the kingdom come into thee; for the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost the which is not given to wicked man," Kempis wrote, under the heading, "Here Beginneth Concerning the Admonitions Drawing Greatly Inward."

Therein is also this: Christ's "visitation is common and apt with an inward man; with him is his sweet talking, gracious consolation, much wonderful familiarity."

And this: "A lover of Jesu and a very inward man and free from inordinate affections may freely turn himself to God and lift himself above himself in spirit and there rest joyously."²⁴

Kempis' title, "Of the Inward Speaking of Christ Unto a Soul," is expanded in part in these beatitudes: "Blissful is that soul that heareth our Lord speaking in him and taketh from his mouth the word of consolation. . . . Plainly those ears are blessed that take no heed to the outward sounding voice but to the truth teaching inwardly. . . . Blessed are they that pierce inward things and study to make themselves ready by daily exercises more and more to take heavenly secrets."²⁵

While John could have read these testimonies, yet, judged by his two quotes in his statement of 1777, he was impressed also or most by parts of the chapter "Of Pure and Simple Intention."²⁶

These parts are: "A man is lift up from earthly things with ij²⁷ wings—they are simplicity and purity; simplicity ought to be in intention, purity in affection: simplicity intendeth God, purity taketh him

and tasteth him. . . . A pure heart pierceth heaven and hell. . . . Such as every man is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly."

Wesley's report of what came to him in 1725 from Kempis is the clear vision, clearer than any previous insight, of the "nature and extent of inward religion." Explore a little the content he gave these phrases.

His ideas of it are these: giving God all his heart; one design in all one speaks; the same in all one does; also in one's thoughts; and, in one's feelings, "one desire ruling all our tempers." So did he understand Kempis' two wings—"simplicity of intention and purity of affection." Contrasted with his previous ideas of it, religion is seen now to delve deeper than words—that is, his avoiding trifling conversation: deeper than works—that is, church attendance, reception of the sacrament, Bible reading, private prayer: deeper than thoughts (his first acknowledgment of any inwardness): it reached unto, if not into, that deepest area of man's personality—the heart or the soul. In this area it is that man's spirit can be met by God, who "is a Spirit."

His parenthesis in the reference of 1777 says something about his ideas of religion in 1725. Recall that it read, "supposing it possible to do this, and go no further." It is likely that here is a clear and correct comprehension of the earlier mistake of 1725. He is saying that then he realized the giving his life to God would afford him no religious advantage unless he gave to God his heart also. At the time, he was quite certain he could do this, but also had some sense that there was a deep fault in his pattern. Such a fault there was. It consisted in his ignorance of the nature of his life's past and of the present condition of his heart. That his past life was sinful and, therefore, unacceptable to a Holy God, he does not realize at all. True it is that hitherto he has admitted he "went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some or other known sin"; but he seems sure that all required is the increase of accepted religious practice and the dedication of life and heart, all of each, to God. Such dedication, he assumes, disposes favorably of his sinful past.

His concern about the two areas of life and heart is one of the most Biblical and sound things in his thought in 1725. Yet he appears to be quite ignorant of what the New Testament says about their existence and, especially, about their order. Judged by his own words, he knows little or nothing of Saint Paul's presentation²⁸ of these two areas of religious experience in their order and in their inseparability. John does not know the Gospel deals first with man as a sinner. It is the heart

which, through Christ's atoning death, is cleansed, remade. Then the dedicated life follows, must follow. However, his eyes are being opened; but now, like those of the blind man of Mark's Gospel, Chapter 8, are so only enough to "see men as trees walking"—that is, indistinct forms in motion. Thus, his parenthesis might mean.

Might it not mean more than an indistinct insight? One wonders. Wonder seems justified by two matters in John Wesley's quite recent experience. Earlier, in May the same year, in reading Kempis whose remarks upon purity of affection impress him strongly, he took no notice of Kempis' witness: "Purity taketh Him [God] and tasteth Him." Only in June of this year 1725, his criticism of Jeremy Taylor's presentation of the powers of proper communing contained this: "If we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which He will not do till we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it." Regeneration as begetting purity; Christ living in a man and vice versa; and sensible evidence of all this—in these is much of the Gospel's very core. Just here, John Wesley was not far from the kingdom. How came he to failure now in 1725, a failure which would run for thirteen years? Were his "eyes holden that he should not know"? If so, was it because he was being tested? Or was it because he was too proud to accept, and needed to be humbled to the "little child" who can enter the kingdom? Or was he dimly hostile to these foreshadowings of the Gospel? Years later, when he is confronted plainly and aggressively by the first part of the Gospel, he will fight it until he is beaten into submission.

Concurrent with the impact of these two books upon John Wesley in 1725, there were three other influences which affected his religious life enough for him to record them.

The first of these was the funeral service of a young woman. Inasmuch as Wesley, writing to his mother in January, 1727,²⁹ says this occurred "about a year and a half ago," its time was mid-summer of 1725. His account of it is: "About a year and a half ago I stole out of company at eight in the evening with a young gentleman with whom I was intimate . . . we took a turn in an aisle of St. Mary's church, in expectation of a young lady's funeral, with whom we were both acquainted. . . ."

St. Mary's register records five probable funerals, the most likely of which Telford took to be that of an Eliza Carter, buried on June 30.³⁰

The significance for John Wesley of this experience is in the fact that it is a reminder to him of death. He came near it in childhood.

During school years, he had disturbing occurrences of nosebleed. Now it takes a friend. Increasingly during his quest, his fear of dying will be for him a major gauge of its failure or success.

The second of these influences was his securing of his first convert to a religious life. He was the "young gentleman" with whom he was intimate, named Griffith.³¹ In the twilight of a June evening, and in the quiet of a church, their spirits moved by the death of a mutual friend, these two young men walked together in an aisle of St. Mary's. What happened Wesley tells: "I asked him if he really thought himself my friend; and if he did, why he would not do me all the good he could. He began to protest; in which I cut him short, by desiring him to oblige me in an instance, which he could not deny to be in his own power; to let me have the pleasure of making him a whole Christian, to which I knew he was at least half persuaded already; that he could not do me a greater kindness, as both of us would be fully convinced when we came to follow that young woman.

"He turned exceedingly serious, and kept something of that disposition ever since. Yesterday was a fortnight, he died of a consumption. I saw him three days before he died; and, on the Sunday following, did him the last good office I could here, by preaching his funeral sermon; which was his desire when living."³²

This event is not extraneous to Wesley's quest. It reveals what he now took a "whole Christian" to be: one who became "exceedingly serious" and continued so. Substantially, this is Wesley's own present religious biography. A second very noteworthy fact herein is that this is the first outreach of either of the Wesleys and the first fruit of their work. That outreach is John Wesley's. This is a long way to John's paraphrasing Jesus, "The field is the world"³³ in his assertion, "The world is my parish"; but the genesis thereof is here.

Third, he describes "meeting with a religious friend, which I never had till now," as a religious asset of great value. He does not say why he had no such friend, but the reasons are obvious. One of these is the low character of the students, his own later description of which is in his sermon, "Scriptural Christianity."³⁴ The second is the same status of religion amongst students and faculty. Without doubt, a largely contributing force was John's acknowledged living like a recluse. It is easy to see why Robert Kirkham, Robin Griffith and he came together, for they were ministers' sons. There, intimate footings ended.

Much has been written upon the identification of this person, and a half-dozen possible persons have been noted.³⁵ Major evidence favors

either of the Kirkham girls,³⁶ Sally or Betty, sisters of Robert Kirkham.

Whichever sister it was, the friendship appears to have budded, at least, into love—the first of John's five romances. Its failure to blossom fully, the theme of much discussion, need not be of prime concern here. Pertinent is the fact of Wesley's finding a kindred soul in things religious, in which, since it was one of these who brought to his attention the books of Taylor and Kempis, Wesley was the party mostly benefited by the association.

These, then, are the powers which bore decisively upon John Wesley during 1725. Their immediate and concrete effects upon him are, in his own words, these: "I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much good, and living so good a life,' I doubted not but I was a good Christian."³⁷

Inasmuch as this is the basic pattern of his quest for the twelve years, it is essential to the understanding of the failure of that search to evaluate this paragraph with care. This can be done by noting what is this statement is John Wesley's and what is not.

What is here.

Wesley's objective is the attaining a "new life," whose essence is "inward holiness." In the Scriptures, this is primary, continuous and indispensable and, therefore, inescapable by any who would be a Bible Christian. His understanding of them in 1725 was quite short of that of the Scriptures. He seems to regard them negatively—that is, as the opposites of "all sin." Such sin is composed of word and deed. Here, he varies from Kempis' teaching that God's law involved one's thoughts also, which is not mentioned.

The effective agent in attaining this objective is Wesley himself. I began, I set apart, I communicated, I watched, I began to aim at and to pray for—these initiatives are all his. Only the phrase, "pray for," implies a reach beyond himself.

His major, if not his whole trust, is in certain means. By use of these, he appears sure he will attain his ends. Hence, he changes the "whole form" of his former practice. The extent of this alteration is only the multiplication of past practice. Private devotions are accorded "an hour or two a day." Reception of sacrament is increased to fifty-two times a year. Habitual and contented sinning becomes watchfulness

against all sin. Routine, general prayer now has the specific petition for inward holiness.

What is not here.

Curiously, there is now not only no major resort to the Bible but also scarce any reference to it! Still, it is beginning to come into consideration of an earnest kind. Previous to January 26, of this year of 1725, John had written his father asking about a commentary on the Bible. On the above date, Samuel, Sr., answered: "You ask me which is the best commentary on the Bible? I answer, the Bible. . . ." ⁸⁸ Surely, that was a wise counsel.

There is no definite reference to any place or power of the Holy Spirit of Wesley's own. He does quote one of Jeremy Taylor's. Neither are God or Christ accorded their due place, power and right. However, probability and fairness summon one to admit that they are assumed through all else.

Past sins are sloughed over, except for admission of their occurrence and of whilom distress over their guilt. The fact of sins, their record, stain, power, punishment—these do not appear.

Excepting the sacrament's implication of it, there is scarcely a hint of a covenanted, effective and inseparable relation between sin and Christ's atoning death. Considering continuing human unwillingness and dilatoriness in acknowledging any need of, and in making any acceptance of, this Divine providing for sin's pardon and for a person's justification, none can censure Wesley harshly. Whatever his Bible reading has been, he has not gotten from it aught of the primarily essential work of the Cross.

Yet Jeremy Taylor could have set it before him. His *Holy Living* presented it plainly, definitely and adequately. His fourth chapter has the title, "Of Christian Religion," section ten of which is subtitled: "Of Preparation to, and the manner how to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." This section opens with this understanding of Old Testament sacrifices: these and "solemn prayers" were then acceptable to God as "an instrument of expiation. But these could not purify the soul from sin, but were typical of the sacrifice of something that could." This is asserting, those sacrifices and prayers meet the guilt and punishment of sin but effect no inner soul-cleansing.

Such purification could be wrought in either of two ways. "Nothing could do this, but either the offering of all that sinned, that every man

should be the *Anathema* or *devoted thing*; or else by some one of the same capacity, who by some superadded excellency might in his own personal suffering have a value great enough to satisfy for all the whole kind of sinning persons. This the Son of God, Jesus Christ, God and man, undertook, and finished by a sacrifice of himself upon the altar of the cross. This sacrifice, because it was perfect, and could be but one, and that once. . . . Christ is pleased to represent to his Father that great sacrifice as a means of atonement and expiation for all mankind. . . ."³⁹

These words of Jeremy Taylor's are in Paragraphs 1-4 of the chapter and section quoted, and it is from Paragraph 5 of the same that John Wesley listed and criticized Taylor's fruits of communing! One naturally asks why John said nothing about this? The apparent and present reason doubtless was his now settled understanding of the efficacy for pardon of sin of communing with "faith, humility, and thankfulness." Though now either unrecognized or unadmitted, there were deeper reasons for his overlooking these words of Taylor's; and these will become evident later.

Jeremy Taylor, in this matter, is not equaled by Wesley's other main teacher in 1725. The Cross of Christ has three grand ministrations to men. First, it is pictorial—that is, it discloses the suffering love of a Holy God over the sins of men. Second, it is atoning—that is, it is the only ordained means by which sinners can be pardoned and then justified with a Holy God. Third, it is exemplary—that is, as Jesus, if He were to fulfill the Father's will for Him on earth, had to take his Cross, so also all who are won by God's suffering love and who, accepting by simple faith alone Christ's atoning death, are justified with God, must follow then His example and bear their cross, whatever it be.

Pertinent here to John Wesley's understanding of what to do with sin is the second of the above meanings of Christ's Cross. It has been seen that Taylor was definite and quite complete in his presentation of the New Testament teaching of it. Kempis is hazy upon it.

Chapter 12 of his Second Book he entitled, "Of the King's Highway of the Cross." It has forty-three items, among them: "He that bare His own cross is gone before and died for thee on the cross that thou shouldst bear thy cross. . . . There is none other way to life and to very inward peace but the way of the holy cross. . . . No man so heartily feelth the passion of Christ as he that suffereth like things. . . . Put thee therefore forward as a good and true servant of Christ to bear manly the cross of thy Lord crucified for thee through love."

Chapter Sixty-one of Part Three has the heading: "That we ought to deny ourselves and follow Christ by the Cross." Therein, Kempis has Christ say: "If thou wilt reign with me, bear My cross; for only the servants of the cross find the way of bliss and of everlasting light." Then to a brother, Kempis says: "Verily the cross is the life of a good monk and the leader to paradise. . . . Have done, brother, go we together: Jesu shall be with us. For Jesu we have taken this cross, for Jesu persevere we in the cross."

"Of the Oblation of Jesu Christ on the Cross" is the title of Part Four, Chapter 8, three parts of which are these: "O Man, as I did offer Myself and My free will unto God My Father, My hands spread on the cross, and My body naked for thy sins; insomuch that nothing remained in Me, but all passed in sacrifice to appease His wrath, in like wise thou oughtest to offer unto Me willingly thyself daily. . . . Behold I did offer myself wholly unto My Father for thee, and for thee I did give all My body and blood, to the end that I should be all wholly thine, and thou Mine also. But and if thou rest in thyself and present thee not with good will unto Me, then there is no full oblation neither entire perfect union between us; for the free oblation of thyself into the hands of Almighty God ought to go before all thy works, if thou wouldst obtain liberty and grace."

Many quotes of this sort from Kempis can be given, but these are adequate for establishing the fact that Kempis accorded small place to Christ's Cross as atoning for sin. Even what he does say of it is no unequivocal, clear-cut and specific statement but is by implication. Kempis uses such implication primarily as a basis for exhorting men to bear their own crosses. Thus, to him the Cross of Christ is primarily exemplary, not atoning.

It is evident that, while it was Taylor who could have been the quickest and profoundest helper of John Wesley, it was Kempis who now moved him most. Yet neither moved him towards that which for all seekers is most essential—the Atoning Cross. One does not marvel that Kempis' implication of it escaped Wesley, but one does wonder that he missed (or put aside?) Taylor's direct and succinct teaching of it. Whether he did or did not suspect or know it, it is true that here in 1725 he was not far from the kingdom. Such a nearness he will not realize until the morning of May 24, 1738.⁴⁰

Care of time, purity of intention, giving oneself wholly to God, the essential inwardness of religion—these Jeremy Taylor and Thomas à Kempis gave John Wesley.

Near the close of 1725, Wesley listed his errors and attached to each a remedy:

Have I loved women and company more than God?

Resolve: Never to let sleep or company hinder me from
going to prayers.

Have I taken God's name in vain?

Resolve: Never to mention it but in religion.

Irreverent behaviour at church?

Resolve: Never to laugh or talk idly thus.

Indevotion?

Prayer and humility.

Pride?

Consider death, the Scriptures.

Idleness?

Six hours every day.

Intemperate sleep?

At five.

Unclean thoughts?

God's omnipresence.⁴¹

John now judged his religious status as this: "So that now, 'doing so much good, and living so good a life,' I doubted not but I was a good Christian."⁴²

Tyerman's summary of Wesley's present state is: "Here, then, we have the turning point in Wesley's history. It was not until thirteen years after this that he received the consciousness of being saved through faith in Christ; but from this time, his whole aim was to serve God and his fellow men, and to get safe to heaven. No man could be more sincere, earnest, devout, diligent, and self-denying; and yet, during this lengthened period, he lived and labored in a mist."⁴³

Year 1725, then, was one of vast significance in the life and work of John Wesley. Formal religion alone, he has been awakened to see, is surpassed far by inward religion. For this latter, he fully determines to seek. Turning point has begotten quest. Quest labors in a mist but is not guideless. We will follow him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE YEARS 1726–29 are the time-field of this chapter. More specifically, the dates are September 19, 1725–November 21, 1729. The geographic area comprises the shires of Oxford and Lincoln, mostly the latter. Compared to the fullness, questioning, exploration and progress of 1725, this period is a quiet one. It is so, however, only with respect to his quest, in which it was more of a fallow time.

Now, for the first, John Wesley's life adds a characteristic which will never leave it till shortly ere his death—sixty-six years in the future. That characteristic is active participation in the life of men and of the world. Hitherto, he has been cloistered mostly for twenty-two years, at home and at two schools. Now he becomes graduate, ordained clergyman, fellow, teacher, curate. At the time, John might not have realized or even perceived the vast import of this addition, but he did realize it by the end of 1726, announcing to his brother Samuel, "Leisure and I have taken leave of one another: I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged to me."¹ This is the "first of Wesley's memorable sayings."² It is also one of his most significant.

Busy, he soon became curate to his father at Epworth and nearby Wroote. He became so twice: first, from some time in April, 1726,³ to the following September 21st. The second time began in August, 1727,⁴ and ended in November, 1729. Between these two periods, he was at Oxford, where on February 14, 1727, he received his Master's degree. The second of the two was broken by a visit to Oxford in July, 1728, when he was ordained a priest on September 22nd.⁵

This intermittent curacy Bishop Hurst called John Wesley's "only experience of parochial work."⁶ In the sense of official relation only is the statement true. At Savannah, while officially he was missionary to the American Indians, in fact he was vicar of the parish. Inasmuch as the Methodist Societies were bodies within the Church of England, he could not be either their curate or vicar: yet in them he had abundant opportunity for parochial work. Still, about the fact that one whose

long and effective life was bound up with religious groups had no official relation to them, there is something arresting one's thought. It will be profitable, therefore, to delineate this parochial experience in general and, as affecting Wesley's quest, in particular.

The general run of John Wesley's life as curate, Curnock compresses into this paragraph: "He worked in the old garden at Wroote, made arbours (one of the seats in which probably remains in part to this day), gathered roses and elder flowers for his sisters, cut stakes, shot plovers in the fenland that then lay between the two parishes, wrote sermons for himself and his father, drank tea here and there, swam on summer mornings in the fen river, and went to every village fair within reach; transcribed letters to or from Varanese, 'Na!' Aspasia, and his brothers; explored a hermit's grave, covered by a great stone; as one to whom hard reading had become easy, he pursued his classical and theological studies, read and collected Spenser's *Faërie Queene*, indulged in *The Spectator*, in plays and other light literature; discussed points of doctrine or moral philosophy with his learned mother, carefully noting her opinions in his *Diary*; laboriously copied out *Dissertations on Job* for his father; read to his sisters as they sat working in the arbour, stood godfather to sister Nancy's baby, discoursed to Miss Kitty Hargreaves, read Spenser to her, and was not unappreciative of her gentle friendship as was his father (not his mother); paid frequent visits to his mother's great friend, Mr. Hoole, at Haxey Rectory; preached severely to the people of Epworth, not sparing their sins, especially their gossip and scandal, visited their sick, and buried their dead. Mindful of the voice that called him to the devout life, he 'writ' his *Diary*, and gave himself to prayer and self-examination. He lived as one who was only, as yet, within sight of the frontier of the kingdom of heaven."⁷

The human color, the variety, the fullness, the particular and illuminating detail of these things tempt strongly to delineation, but there is required here only the consideration of one current matter and of three directly involved in Wesley's quest.

Curnock's sketch of John Wesley's life and work at Wroote contains the item of his vigorous inveighing against the gossip and scandal of the Epworth folk. Though unspecified, it is undoubtedly a reference to the tragic marriage of Hetty Wesley.

The presently pertinent facts are these:⁸ Hetty probably had been engaged to a young lawyer: but some default occurred. To rectify this, Hetty sought him and, in doing so, remained out of home a whole night.

Without hearing her side of the matter, the father, mother, and sister Emily condemned Hetty as a "bad woman." John's description of their attitude towards her is: "'Tis likely enough he (Samuel, Sr.) would not see her when at Wroote: he has disowned her long ago, and never spoke of her in my hearing but with the utmost detestation. Both he, my mother, and several of my sisters were persuaded her penitence was but feigned.'"⁹

Charles Wesley appears to have been, if not neutral, at least not positive in this family tragedy. Molly¹⁰ and John stood staunchly by Hetty.

John's active siding with Hetty against his father is reported by Charles, who quoted him as saying of John: "'Every day, you hear how he contradicts me, and takes your sister's part before my face. Nay, he disputes with me, preach—.' And then he stopped short as if he wanted to recall his word. . . .'"¹¹

The unfinished word refers to John's preaching two sermons relating both to parish gossip about Hetty and to John's championship of her. The first was on "Charity." It was written, read and approved by Susannah; reported to his father; and preached on August 28, 1726. The other was on the subject "Rash Judging," of which John says, "with my father's leave I preached on Sunday." That was on September 18.¹²

John's own statements of his attitude to Hetty are these: "The disputed point between my father and me was the particular measure of charity due to wicked men. . . . My sister Hetty's behavior has, for aught I have heard, been innocent enough since her marriage. Most of my disputes on Charity with my father were on her account, he being inconceivably exasperated against her."

Hetty had repented and sought pardon.¹³ The parents and some of the family, believing her repentance to be insincere, refused to accept her. John would receive her. "One great reason for my writing the above-mentioned sermon," he wrote Brother Samuel,¹⁴ "was to endeavour, as far as in me lay, to convince them that, even on the supposition that she was impenitent, some tenderness was due her still, which my mother, when I read it to her, was so well aware of that she told me as soon as she had read it, 'You writ this sermon for Hetty; the rest was brought in for the sake of the last paragraph.'"

Hetty bears upon Wesley's quest in two indirect ways—his withstanding alone almost his entire family, both his mother who had been during the past year his trusted consultant, and his father to whom he has owed so much monetary, academic and ecclesiastical support; his public defense of his sister by exposition of Christian principles; and temerity,

bold and brash, in forewarning his ecclesiastical superior he would preach against that person's position and also would do so in the superior's own pulpit—all this reveals a grasp of truth, a dedication to it, and a courageous presentation of it, which reveal a man of the first rank in character. This keeping his own counsel amidst the many, the quasi-ignorant, the speculative, the biased, the pitying voices around disclose a high degree of strength, patience and independence. It will appear again and again throughout his quest as well as throughout his life.

The other relationship of these sermons to Wesley's quest and life consists of his coming firmly to the Gospel's teaching that the love of God comprises even "wicked men." Nearly a year ago, he had read two sermons on "Universal Charity" and had formed then the purpose of writing upon that subject.¹⁵ These sermons were by Dr. Samuel Clarke and Bishop Francis Atterbury, both of whom were alive when John Wesley read and used their sermons. Clarke's sermon was on the subject, "The Power of Charity to cover Sin"; and Atterbury's was on "The Great Duty of Universal Love and Charity." Their grand theme simmered in the mind of student Wesley. A tragic romance within his family intensified simmering to boiling. Unlike her earthly father, but like unto the Heavenly Father, this one brother of Hetty, while never denying whatever error or sin his sister had committed, is not recorded as writing much about that but is recorded as declaring to father and family, at home and at church, that Hetty even though unrepentant was due a "measure of charity."¹⁶

Here in 1726, Seeker John Wesley has come, in teaching and in practice, near to God's loving the utterly unlovely as seen by Paul: "God commended his love towards us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us."¹⁷ This is Divine Love's reach. Later, John Wesley will come to personal experience and assurance of God's love for him, a sinner: and, thenceforth, he will preach and exemplify such love. Now, in 1726, he has grasped, in understanding only, the mighty fact of it.

Books constitute the first of the three things now directly bearing upon John Wesley's quest. Again, there are two: "But meeting now with Mr. Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call*, although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that everything appeared in a new view," wrote John.¹⁸

Taylor's and Kempis' books were old. New, these were. William

Law's *Christian Perfection* was published in 1726; his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, in 1728.¹⁹ These two books, particularly the latter, had a present and profound power. The Wesleys, Whitefield, Edward Gibbon, Samuel Johnson, Henry Venn, Lord Lyttleton, Thomas Macaulay—all were moved deeply by Law. "Few books have ever made so many religious enthusiasts," Southey testifies.²⁰ Inasmuch as this is true; and inasmuch as these two books exerted a great influence upon the Methodists, a sketch of their author is pertinent.

William Law was born at Kingscliffe, Northamptonshire, in 1686; and there on April 8, 1761, he died. Educated at Cambridge, his Master's degree was received in 1712, and his election to a fellowship occurred in 1713. "Shortly after," 1715, he became curate to Dr. Heylyn, rector of St. Mary-le-Strand in London. John Byrom, the poet, said Law was "such a gay parson" as to draw from his superior, when the *Serious Call* appeared, the comment the book would have been better if the author "had travelled that way himself."²¹ When George I became King in 1714, Law refused to take the oath of allegiance and, therefore, had to quit his fellowship. Thus, he became a non-juror.

For a time, "the next few years," he appears to have been a "curate in London."²² This might be his curacy with Dr. Heylyn. If so, these were the years, since his first books appeared in 1726 and 1728, when the "gay parson" was such upon the surface only, while in the depths of his soul he was exploring the spiritual fields of *The Devout and Holy Life*.

In 1727, he was at Putney, a few miles south of London. There, in the home of Edward Gibbon, he became tutor to this man's son, born in 1707 and named also Edward. This second Edward Gibbon in 1737 fathered a son, the famous historian Edward Gibbon. Of the Gibbon family, Law became the "much-honoured friend and spiritual director."²³ The dual relation of tutor and religious guide continued until 1740, when the death of the eldest Edward Gibbon broke up the family.

William Law then returned to Kingscliffe. Soon, he was joined by the historian's aunt, Mrs. Hester Gibbon; and later, by the "wealthy widow," Mrs. Archibald Hutcheson, whose husband had advised her to put herself under the religious care of Law. What Paula and her daughter Eustochium were to Saint Jerome in Bethlehem of Judea from A.D. 385 to 420,²⁴ these two women, wealthy and pious, were to William Law for the remaining twenty-one years of his life. These three were "devoted to the following of Law's book, spending most of their income in charity, and their time in religious devotion."²⁵ Simple, secure,

serene, religious—such was the life of William Law. Like Immanuel Kant, he traversed no large geographic area: Kingscliffe to Cambridge, to London, to Putney, and back to Kingscliffe, no point of which was sixty miles from the others—this was his range. Yet his influence reached a vaster area, in space and in time, and is still felt. The Wesleys did a great deal in diffusing his influence.

Glimpses of the inner man Law was are afforded us by the historian. "In our family he had left the reputation of a worthy and pious man who believed all that he professed, and practiced all that he enjoined." The *Serious Call*, which Gibbon named his "master work" and which "domestic connection tempted" him to peruse, he characterized as presenting, as did all Law's theological writings, "an imperfect sort of life. . . . His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel: his satire is sharp but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life. . . . If he finds a spark of piety in the reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame; and a philosopher must allow that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world. Under the names of Flavia and Miranda, he has admirably described my two aunts—the heathen and the Christian sister."²⁶

Gibbon decried, however, Law's "religious frenzy," as it appeared in his "ridiculous intemperance of sentiment and language."²⁷ He decried also, as did John Wesley, the deep change which occurred in Law's thought and life when his mind became "clouded" by enthusiasm and his writings became "darkly tintured by the incomprehensible visions of Jacob Behmen."²⁸ When Law depicted Wesley's "address to the Clergy" as "Babylonish . . . empty babble, fitter for an old grammarian, who has grown blear-eyed in mending dictionaries," he illustrates what Gibbon termed "intemperance of language and sentiment"; and illustrates also what Wesley meant in his exhortation, "Once more, sir, let me beg you to consider whether your extreme roughness, and morose and sour behaviour, at least on many occasions, can possibly be the fruit of a living faith in Christ."²⁹

Nothing which questing Wesley met came so nigh destroying what faith he had as did William Law's mysticism. He brought the young clergyman to his spiritual nadir. Now in 1727, the same man, the pre-mystic William Law, raised John to the zenith of his search to date.

"In 1727 I read Mr. Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call*, and more explicitly resolved to be all devoted to God in body, soul, and spirit."³⁰

These are the calmer words of the perspective and assurance of later years. Thirty-eight years before, however, when the unsure striving and ardent yearning of youth saw a light from one who had climbed the heights, the effect was greatly different. "Much offended . . . convinced more than ever . . . exceeding height and breadth and depth . . . flowed in so mightily . . . a new view . . . cried to God for help . . . resolved not to prolong . . . as I had never done before"—these phrases have a tumultuous, turbulent character. They designate something greater, more huge than all which he had hitherto known. It is blinding, sweeping, compelling. He has fresh insight. Conviction is more powerful. There is passionate imploring for divine help. Dilatory obedience is activated by resolution, stronger than any former resolve.

Rhapsodic, ecstatic, this might be characterized by some. Such characterization, however, cannot mitigate or much less obscure the fact that Law's books gave John a great lift above what he had been before religiously.

Many, reading the above record of experience, might wonder why the quest should not end here, why God did not respond. The adequate reply is found in the final sentence of this paragraph. Therein, Wesley stated his religious status, as raised by William Law's book, in this way: "And by my continued endeavour to keep His whole law, inward and outward, to the utmost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of Him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation."

Note in this the parade of pronouns: *my* endeavor, *my* power, *I* was persuaded, *I* should be accepted, *I* was then. To become what William Law said a Christian devout in spirit and holy in life should be, these are his means. Save for a cry to God for help, his resources are his own powers, his own exertions. He will obey. He will keep God's whole law. Hitherto, he had not worked hard enough in achieving perfect obedience. He assumes that he, John Wesley, as he now is, could obey God's whole law as it ought to be obeyed. As yet, he cannot or will not say with a long-ago seeker, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."³¹ He himself can perform the good by his resolution. Former disobedience has not taught him that natural powers which were inadequate to past obedience are even less adequate for a greater grasp of what must be obeyed. Moreover, past disobediences appear to be taken not at all into consideration as real deeds recorded in the records of heaven. Fresh endeavor tacitly is assumed to cancel them or to cause God to dismiss them. He is but "born of the will of man."³²

Yet, under all this, there ran a condemning understanding of the true beginnings of genuine Christian living. His frank letter of December 10, 1745 confesses: "I am one who for twenty years used outward works, not only as 'acts of goodness,' but as commutations (though I did not indeed profess this), instead of inward holiness. I knew I was not holy. But I quieted my conscience by doing such-and-such outward works; and therefore I hoped I should go to heaven, even without inward holiness."

Very fitting it is, therefore, that under the heading of the first part of his *Journal*, which records his quest, he should give this characterization of it: "What shall we say then? That . . . Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by *faith*, but by the works of the law—Rom. IX. 30–32." This is his looking back from 1739, and his judging his case as it was in 1729. If at all or how clearly the understanding of 1739 was present ten years earlier can scarcely be known. What is known is that it would be nine years ere he would come either or both to accede to or to understand that a sinner is justified not by the works of the law but by the hearing of faith. This change is the heart of his quest.

The two other influences affecting Wesley's quest and life at Wroote were the counsels of two men, unnamed. The one was a "serious man" whom John purposely visited. To Wesley, this man said: "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven? Remember that you cannot serve Him alone. You must therefore find companions or make them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."³³ The interrogative sentence affords quite certain inference, that this was what John Wesley asked this serious person.³⁴ Undoubtedly, this person knew of John Wesley's reclusive ways and warned him of their ruinous limitations.

The other voice was that of a "dying old man," who lived in the area of Wroote. To John Wesley, the young curate, he said: "I have listened to your voice from the pulpit. Me thinks it is a trumpet that belongs to the multitude. The fens and forests have small claims upon you, sir."³⁵ Whether apocryphal prophecy or not, it is shown to be truth by events soon to begin.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NOVEMBER 21ST, 1729, begins another period in the quest of John Wesley; it ends on October 14, 1735. His quest can be characterized by a phrase of one of his later class leaders, John Hague of Devizes, Wiltshire. There, in February, 1747, while examining the classes, John Wesley requested such class leaders as had leisure to do it, to write for him reports of the spiritual and religious condition of those in their classes. John Hague's read: seven "seem to retain their confidence in the Lord"; six "seem to be shut up in a fog"; nine "seem to be earnest, seeking the Lord"; and then comes this—"J. J., M. H. appear to have a desire, and to be widely seeking something."¹ The details of this will be given in the next chapters.

Here, notice is required only of certain background items. The geographic center of this period is Oxford, but London soon begins to move into that center. Accompanied sometimes by Charles, John made brief journeys: in 1731, two to London and two to Lincolnshire; in 1732, two more to Lincolnshire and one to London; in 1734, one to London. Doubtless, there were unmentioned others.

The official side of his life includes his fellowship at Lincoln, with its pupils and its preaching: also, a short curacy near Oxford,² of which opportunity he said, "I accepted with all my heart." Increased income caused some of this elation, but some of it he attributed to this, "so now I needn't sell my horse, since it is at least as cheap to keep one as to hire one."³

In August, 1732, he was elected a member of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. It is a connection which, in an indirect way, will have a bearing on his going to Georgia in 1735.⁴

For these six years, the Holy Club, which John named "our little Society," will be in the foreground—its rise, expansion, work and its end.

He will begin his long, varied, abundant literary work: hymn translations, his first published sermon, and, for the use of his students, *A*

Collection of Forms of Prayer,⁵ his first publication of any book. Sermon and book were printed in 1735.

For the detail of The Quest in these six years, one can begin with his sketch of it in the *Journal*: however, there he can begin only. For intimate insights into his mind and soul, nothing except his too scantily available diaries can equal his letters. These are the chief sources for The Quest in this period.

Those of this time number seventy-one. Of them, John wrote forty-eight. They were written primarily to five persons: to brother Samuel, four; to Ann Granville, five; to his father, five; to his mother, six; and to Mary Pendarves, twenty-one.

In general character, they naturally vary. He seems to have written frankly and freely to Ann Granville; but only once. Letters to Samuel were contentious, one opening thus: "I had rather dispute, if I must dispute, with you than with any man living, because it may be done with so little expense of time and words."⁶ Those to his father, one being the most lengthy of the forty-eight, and also one of the lengthiest in John's known correspondence, are concerned with news, reports on books read, and religious and theological themes. These are presented without question or request for his father's ideas or counsel. Once he asked counsel about the Holy Club: and only once did he bare his soul to him.

Alone to his mother, he repeatedly opened his heart, urgently and frankly requesting her thought and counsel. Rarely did she give him aught else. What a wise woman! After 1733, frank correspondence with her begins to wane.⁷

The Pendarves letters have, of all John's correspondence, a unique character—a blend of religious and moral question and counsel; mutually sought and, especially on his side, diffidently given; amidst an aura of quite fulsome praise and of unrealized romance. She was the first of the three widows who elicited his desire to wed. In all John's correspondence with women, there is none like this. His counseling her savors more of Fenelon's letters to Madame de Maintenon and his discourses to the "spiritual conferences held at the court of Louis XIV"⁸ than of traditional Wesleyan ways.

The first area of widening in John Wesley's life and quest is the geographic one from Wroote-Epworth in Lincolnshire to Oxford. There, he arrives at "four o'clock on Saturday afternoon," November 21, 1729.

The major cause of his return was the faculty's alarm at student immorality and a determination to do something about it. Such student

conditions were the academic phase of general English life, whose character had been described, regretted and assailed for a score or more years. This warfare enlisted official Oxford University in open combat while John Wesley was at Wroote.¹⁰ It is scarcely disputable that Wesley's own personal alteration of his academic and religious practice contributed to faculty attempts at reform.

Sometime during John's absence, "The vice-chancellor, the heads of houses and proctors, issued an edict, which was posted in most of the college halls,¹¹ to the effect that certain members of the university had of late been in danger of being corrupted by the wicked and blasphemous notions of the advocates of pretended human reason against Divine revelation."

Such being the foe, mode of attack was this: "Therefore, it was a matter of the utmost consequence that the college tutors should use double diligence in explaining to their respective pupils the articles of religion and their Christian duty, and in recommending to them the frequent and careful reading of the Scriptures, and such other books as might serve more effectually the orthodox faith and sound principles."

It is just to remember here that one student, Wesley by name, all alone had set foot upon this path by fulfilling official university requirements concerning a student's religious obligations. This was four years ere this faculty edict of 1729! Also, it is mere justice to John Wesley to remember, while reading later the criticisms of the ways of Wesley in both the Holy Club and in his own pupil group, that again he was doing what the head officers of the university had decided should be done!¹²

Since the prime soldier of this war was the tutor; since John Wesley was a fellow of Lincoln College and a class moderator; and since the faculty was aware, undoubtedly, that he as a student had exemplified independently and unswervingly the conduct they wished to generate, he was summoned to return to Oxford and to his duties as fellow.

Hence, on October 21, 1729, the rector of Lincoln, Doctor Morley, a "warm friend"¹³ of John's, wrote to him to return:

"At a meeting of the Society . . . to consider of the proper method to preserve discipline and good government; among several things agreed on, it was in the opinion of all that were present, judged necessary that the junior fellows who should be chosen moderators, shall in person attend the duties of their office. . . ."

Considerate of John's still meager income, he continued: "We hope it may be as much to your advantage to reside at college as where you

are, if you take pupils, or can get a curacy in the neighborhood of Oxon." He concluded: "The interest of college, and obligation of statute" require return to Oxford.¹⁴

He returned, leaving Epworth on November 9th. He went *en route* to Gainsborough to visit his sister Emilia and thence south to London, arriving at the Red Lion in Aldersgate Street. In the city, he spent several days, attending the theater and visiting. His visits included brother Samuel and his wife; Susannah's sister Nancy, who "promised him her picture"; sister Hetty, whom he saw "more than once"; and others. Saturday afternoon at four o'clock, he reached Oxford.¹⁵ The date was November 21, 1729.

Such was John Wesley's "transition from the life of a country curate to that of an Oxford tutor, lecturer, moderator, leader."¹⁶ The first three activities are minor in this work, though the second will be prominent apart from academic classes. The fourth must be the dominant phase of John Wesley's official fellowship years. What the leader led and what the leader was in himself in this period of his quest—these are the germane matters now. They are so closely related that discussion of them must keep close to chronology.

The background data for this period's closer delineation are, first, the formation and practice of the Holy Club, and, second, Wesley's own resumé of his quest's content.

The facts of the former are these:

Its root was John Wesley. In 1726,¹⁷ Charles Wesley, nineteen years of age, was elected to Christ Church College at Oxford. Sometime between March and September of that year, he came to Oxford. He is described as "exceedingly sprightly and active, very apt to learn, but arch and unlucky, though not ill-natured."¹⁸ He became prominent in the lighter sides of college life, writing later: "My first year at college I lost in diversions."¹⁹ This evaluation is that of the matured man of sixty years later, who justly considered all from the viewpoint of what endures both here and hereafter. That he did not neglect his studies, John testifies: "He pursued his studies diligently and led a regular harmless life."²⁰

John testifies also to his brother's major deficiency: "If I spoke to him about religion, he would warmly answer, 'What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?' and would hear no more."²¹

And wisely, John said no more.

Then, sometime in 1728, the sown seed burst and thrust above ground

this shoot. January, 1729, he wrote John: "I would willingly write a diary of my actions but do not know how to go about it. What particulars am I to take notice of? Am I to give my thoughts and words, as well as deeds, a place in it? I am to mark all the good and ill I do; and what besides? Must I not take account of my progress in learning, as well as religion? What cipher can I make use of? If you would direct me to the same or like method to your own, I would gladly follow it; for I am fully convinced of the usefulness of such an undertaking. I shall be at a stand till I hear from you."

External method, this is! Then Charles bared the inner deeps: "God has thought fit (it may be to increase my wariness) to deny me at present your company and assistance. It is through your means, I firmly believe, that God will establish what he hath begun in me; and there is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you. It is owing, in great measure, to somebody's prayers (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do; for I cannot tell myself how or when I woke out of my lethargy: only it was not long after you went away."²²

From John, there is no known reply.

May 29, 1729, Charles wrote John again. "Providence has at present put it into my power to do some good. I have a modest, humble, well-disposed youth lives next me, and have been, thank God, somewhat instrumental in keeping him so. He was got into vile hands, and is now broke loose. I assisted in setting him free, and will do my utmost to hinder him from getting in with them again. He was of opinion that passive goodness was sufficient; and would fain have kept in with his acquaintance and God at the same time. He durst not receive the sacrament, but at the usual times, for fear of being laughed at. By convincing him of the duty of frequent communicating, I have prevailed upon both of us to receive once a week."

Of his own state spiritually, he said: "I earnestly long for, and desire, the blessing God is about to send me in you. I am sensible *this* is my day of grace; and that upon my employing the time before our meeting and next parting, will in great measure depend my condition for eternity."²³

One more item of Charles' story of awakening must be added here. To one about to leave England for America, Charles thus referred to this part of his past: "My first year at college I lost in diversions. The next I set myself to study. Diligence led me into serious thinking. I went to the weekly sacrament, and persuaded two or three young scholars

to accompany me, and to observe the method of study prescribed by the statutes of the university."²⁴

Notice that Charles did not admit it was John's rebuke which altered his life, though he might have been sure he did not need to do so. He attributes his change to three forces: his mother's prayers, his own diligence in study, and what God began. He is sure it is John who will be the "means" by whom God will complete—"establish"—what has begun in his soul.

Notice, too, that Charles expresses his awakening in John's pattern: studying earnestly and regularly attending sacrament.

However, what his brother did not, Charles did: he reached out to another. John discovered his only "religious friend" by a sort of an accident: but Charles sought his. Charles Wesley's neighbor student was probably William Morgan. The other earliest member of the pre-Holy Club group was Robert Kirkham.²⁵ These three were the precursors of the Holy Club. Not John but Charles Wesley brought them together.

The second part of the background of Wesley's quest is his own sketch of it, given in his *Journal*.

His *Journal's* recording of the nature of his quest from 1730 to the time of his leaving England for Georgia in October 1735, is as follows. To assist in the grasp of it, its solid paragraphs are broken into their composing parts.

"In 1730, I began visiting the prisons, assisting the poor and sick in town, and doing what other good I could, by my presence or my little fortune, to the bodies and souls of all men. To this end I abridged myself of all superfluities, and many that are called necessities of life. I soon became a byword for so doing, and I rejoiced that 'my name was cast out as evil.'

"The next spring I began observing the Wednesday and Friday fasts, commonly observed in the ancient Church; tasting no food till three in the afternoon.

"And now I knew not how to go any farther.

"I diligently strove against all sin. I omitted no sort of self-denial which I thought lawful; I carefully used, both in public and in private, all the means of grace at all opportunities. I omitted no occasion of doing good: I for that reason suffered evil.

"And all this I knew to be nothing, unless as it was directed

toward inward holiness. Accordingly this, the image of God, was what I aimed at in all, by doing his will, not my own.

"Yet when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort, or any assurance of acceptance with God. At this I was then not a little surprised, not imagining I had been all this time building on the sand, nor considering that 'other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid by God, even Christ Jesus.

"Soon after a contemplative man convinced me, still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God. But even of his instructions (though I then received them as the words of God), I cannot but now observe: 1. That he spoke so incautiously against trusting in outward works, that he discouraged me from doing them at all. 2. That he recommended (as it were, to supply what was wanting in them) mental prayer, and the like exercises, as the most effectual means of purifying the soul, and uniting it with God. Now these were in truth, as much my own works as visiting the sick or clothing the naked; and the union with God thus pursued, was as really my own righteousness, as any I had before pursued under another name.

"In this refined way of trusting to my own works, and own righteousness (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers), I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or help therein, till the time of my leaving England."²⁶

CHAPTER NINE

WESLEY'S REFERENCE to prison-visitation concerns what began in August of 1730 as an addition to Holy Club practice. Therefore, let us defer discussion of it now until that time, and review what other matters occurred previous to August.

Attention must be given to John's relation to Charles Wesley and his religious friends.

To those, before John returned to Oxford, the name "Methodists" was given. Their academic and religious regularity drew general notice, since these were so different from that of the general run of students. Then, on an unknown day in 1729, "a young gentleman, a student of Christ Church, remarked, 'Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up.'"¹ The adjective "new" indicates it was an old term. Who this young gentleman was is not stated. However, part of a letter to his father informs us that John knew him. December 11, he wrote, "Tomorrow night I expect to be in company with the gentleman who did us the honour to take the first notice of our little Society. I have terrible reasons to think he is as slenderly provided with humanity as with sense and learning."²

Charles Wesley gathered: John Wesley fashioned—such is the origin of the Holy Club. Charles and his friends were depending upon John for the realization of their aspirations. Especially so dependent was John's brother Charles. Later, his religious status will be designated as "awakened." Now, however, neither Wesley has understanding and experience enough to recognize any such status. Charles now believed he had real religion, but he needed to be "established" in it: therein his brother was to be the "instrument" of God. How fragmentary and disordered his comprehension of the Christian Gospel was: how little help in the actual establishing of it in him his brother was to be: how his brother would be but a seed planter: what a very humble Apollos the waterer would be: how long in the future establishment would be—Charles cannot know now. Still, he knew he now had something

religious greater than he had had hitherto; he knew it was incomplete; he wanted completion; and he is set out in his search for it. To what extent his friends were like-minded is not specified; but, certainly they were above the average student, and much like Charles Wesley.

Upon reaching Oxford, John both joined this group and, by virtue of his age, academic rating, and religious zeal, he became the organizer and leader of it. This is the first widening of his quest. Previously, his religious association has been with that "religious friend," but now he has three such. These he formed into the Holy Club—so the academic public dubbed it. He referred to it as "our little company" and "our little Society."

Forming the group was not an original idea of his own. It was gleaned from his current reading. Answering in 1760 some criticisms of the Methodists in the *London Magazine*, he wrote this: "About thirty years since, I met with a book written in King William's time, called *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners*. There I read these words: 'If good men of the Church will unite together in the several parts of the kingdom, disposing themselves into friendly societies, and engaging each other in their respective combinations to be helpful to each other in all good, Christian ways, it will be the most effectual means for restoring our Christianity to its primitive life and vigour and the supporting of our tottering and sinking Church.'"³

Then John Wesley continues: "A few young gentlemen then at Oxford approved of, and followed, the advice. "They were all zealous churchmen and both orthodox and regular to the highest degree."⁴

Apparently, John brought this proposal to the attention of his brother and his two friends, who approved and adopted it. Here is our Methodist sinapic seed: four young men in earnest in regular observance of a very few simple Christian practices. They had only one aim: "All determined to be Bible Christians."⁵ To John Wesley, this was the first Methodist Society.⁶ Upon every hand, they were reviled: so blind is smug custom. Report of them reaching the Bishop of London, he commented: "A few young rawheads, what can they pretend to do?"⁷ So obtuse can entrenched officialdom become! It is, at least, interesting to note that the Bishop's misjudgment appears in Wesley's sermon on "Signs of the Times," on Jesus' words, "Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"⁸

What those "young rawheads" were now doing was this: to be "helpful to each other in all good, Christian ways." Such ways were: at first, meeting every Sunday, then meeting three or four evenings a week

in John's room; on weekdays reading over together the classics privately read before; and, on Sunday, reading some book in divinity.

The classic authors read are not specified, but the religious books are: *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, by Henry Scougal,⁹ *The Whole Duty of Man*,¹⁰ *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners*,¹¹ and probably, Lawrence Jackson's *Practice of Devotion*.¹²

It is quite certain that Kempis', Taylor's and Law's writings were used. Also, since they were "zealous and orthodox churchmen," *The Homilies of the Church* were employed. John's sermons quote them next often to the Bible.

Above all these, the Bible begins to be accepted by John as the unique and condign centrality and finality which, for him and the Methodists, it would hold steadily. This is a large step forward. During school years, he "read . . . the Scriptures." In 1724 or 1725, his asking his father what was the best commentary on the Bible had been answered thus: "The Bible." It turned the son to a deeper delving into the Scriptures, part of the prime and basic result appearing to have been this: "In 1730 I began to be *homo unius libri*, to study (comparatively) no book but the Bible."¹³ He became a "man of one book." Thence arose the disparaging popular epithets, "Bible Bigots" and "Bible Moths." These were also ignorant, as is implied in Wesley's parenthetical word, "comparatively." It does by no means declare his discard of other books; for all his life, as his writings show, he read steadily in many areas, both secular and religious. It does mean that he takes the Bible now as final authority in ethics and in religion. Henceforth, through all his life and work, there will run the *ipse dixit*: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." It is Isaiah's exhortation to the confused people of that troubled day who went for guidance to "wizards that peep and mutter."¹⁴

It is not likely that all the present or future members of the Holy Club held this view of the Bible. Later, John wrote, "In 1729 two young men reading the Bible saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do"¹⁵—a statement which implies that only he and his brother fully embraced such a view of the Scriptures. Neither of them would ever change this view.

At this time, John Wesley did not realize the extent of his exaltation of the Scriptures: nor would he do so for some seven or eight years. His 1740 extract of his *Diary* has no reference to it. Seeing with the perspective of thirty-six years, in May, 1765, its effects at that time were these: "I then saw, in a stronger light than ever before, that only *one*

thing is needful, even faith that worketh by the love of God and man, all inward and outward holiness; and I groaned to love God with all my heart, and to serve Him with all my strength."¹⁶

Each truth herein is clearly New Testament, and his yearning for the realization and experience of them in himself is highly commendable. He is correct in according the initiative to faith but is in grave error in not allowing its utterly indispensable and prime reference to the atoning sacrifice of Christ for the pardon of his, John Wesley's, sin. His strong desire to possess "all inward and outward holiness" is the admission he now does not have this; but he does not (or will not?) see or admit he now has, or is, its opposite, sin. Groaning, however agonized it might be, can be of no consummating effect in his present status. It signifies the intensity of his quest but depicts it as confused.

Another example of present ignorance of Gospel essentials appears in the following occurrence. It is known that John Wesley lectured to the Holy Club on the New Testament. Some of his notes for this are preserved. One of these is upon the interview between Jesus and Nicodemus, recorded in chapter three of John's Gospel. His notes open with comments upon three Greek words in the text. Next, he analyzed the chapter into four parts; then exposition begins at verse one.

His explanation of verses three and five reads:

3. "Jesus answered"; Yet unless a man has a new principle of life given him, he cannot acknowledge that I am come from God.
5. "Jesus answered"; The birth I speak of is that wrought by the Holy Ghost in Baptism.¹⁷

Two blank pages follow these notes! Why these unfilled pages? Did their emptiness mean he glimpsed, suspected or felt there was more to say? Did they mean he could not say now what that more was? Or instead of being unready, was he unwilling to entertain in his own mind, to explore, to write what he really saw?

Speculative questions carry one far. It is better to understand Wesley through his own words upon these most primary, deep and pervading texts in the Gospel of Christ. His notes indicate quite clearly that here something died for John Wesley; and that something came alive.

Something died. It was something concerning the sacrament of baptism. More specifically, it is bracketed by his two remarks upon it. The first is the above-noted remark upon the results of his own baptism: "I believe, till I was about ten years old, I had not sinned away that

'washing of the Holy Ghost' which was given me in baptism." The other is his remark upon John 3:5, "'Jesus answered', The birth I speak of is that wrought by the Holy Ghost in baptism."

Plainly, he is maintaining the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. This was natural to him, since his church so taught.¹⁸ His mentor, Jeremy Taylor, held a very similar belief.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, his parents taught him the "meaning and purpose"²⁰ of baptism. In undisturbed formal and intellectual acceptance of this doctrine, he lived in content and in serenity unconsciously allowing himself liberal moral and religious discount.

Then, five years ago, he was driven to see the moral realities of his own life as what they really were. The beatings of these bold facts compelled him, not to deny the efficacy of his "washing of the Holy Ghost" given in his baptism, but to confess to himself that that clearness he himself had "sinned away." Through these past five years, this consciousness has increased and, now, under the impact of his present acceptance of the Bible as final and of his subsequent earnest study of it, he is forced to acknowledge a loss of a religious status he had from baptism.

Reappraisal begot something else. This something was not any present discard of baptismal regeneration. His note on verse five declares his retention of that doctrine.²¹ Verse five does speak of baptism by water and also of baptism by the Spirit. These are external sign and internal mode. With these, Wesley does not tarry. Nor does he tarry with the consequent status—the seeing and entering the kingdom of God. He concerns himself mostly with the inner result of the new birth, which result is: one's receiving as a gift from another a "new principle of life"—that is, something inner, powerful, transforming and controlling from which one's outer living flowed. The differences between an unborn child and the same child born illustrate those betwixt a soul unborn spiritually and the same soul born of the Spirit.²²

To evaluate John's understanding of the effect of the new birth, set it beside what he wrote in June, 1725,²³ upon regeneration. Then, he criticized the inconsistency of Jeremy Taylor's listing the vast changes effected in a worthy communicant and his denying that one could ever know certainly he was forgiven by God. He objected: "If we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, which He will not do till we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it." Concerned now are we with the term "regenerate" and its immediate consequence. John then accepted

Taylor's joining repentance and its change as regeneration. He accepted, too, Taylor's effects of communing: union with "Christ the head" and reception of the "seeds of an immortal nature."

Compared to these two results of regeneration, John's 1730 "new principle of life" appears to be a sort of formula, merely intellectual and informal. He lost ground for the time. New birth is joined to baptism, to which he limits the work of the Holy Ghost. Regeneration and the Cross have no relation. The two blank pages in his notes upon John 3 might be understood as part of the content of his confession in his *Journal*, "and now I knew not how to go any further."

There will be no significant change in the practices of the Holy Club until August. Meantime, notice the other items, pertinent to Wesley's quest, which occur in 1730.

His quest was the deep, steady undercurrent of a surface flow of widening activities. "Immediately after his return" from Wroote, Dr. Morley "put eleven pupils under Wesley's care."²⁴ These, he taught faithfully in academic studies and especially in matters religious. To this latter end, he devoted part of every day save Sunday in lecturing to them. Had he not done so, he said he would have considered himself a "highwayman." To make his students now at Oxford and later those in his own schools both "scholars and Christians" was a lifelong aim.²⁵

Part of the university form of education was a daily disputation by the students. Whether or not these involved only those of one teacher or a larger group is not specified. Neither is it specified whether or not the disputation was formal or informal debate or discussion. Each disputation was presided over by a moderator; and in that capacity John Wesley acted six days a week. He appreciated this training. "I could not avoid acquiring hereby some degree of expertness in arguing, and especially in discerning and pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art."²⁶

February 27, he was offered a curacy. It was to continue for three or six months, at a salary of thirty pounds a year. He wrote, "I accepted with all my heart."²⁷

The next day, his letter to his mother records his further delving into Jeremy Taylor's book. "Two things in Bishop Taylor I have been thinking of since I writ last; one of which I like exceedingly, and the

other not." It was five years ago he first mined some ore in Taylor's strike. Between then and now, he has been refining it, with these results.

He dislikes Taylor's understanding of faith, because he made hope a "species of faith, and consequently contained in it." Paul, however, clearly distinguished between hope and faith.²⁸

Taylor's "account of the pardon of sins" he likes "exceedingly" as the "clearest he ever met with." He quotes Taylor:

"Pardon of sins in the gospel is sanctification. Christ came to take away our sins, by turning every one of us from our iniquities (Acts III. 26). And there is not in the nature of the thing any expectation of pardon, or sign or signification of it, but so far as the thing itself discovers itself. As we hate sin, and grow in grace, and arrive at the state of holiness, which is also a state of repentance and imperfection, but yet of sincerity of heart and diligent endeavour; in the same degree we are to judge of the forgiveness of sins: for indeed that is the evangelical forgiveness, and it signifies our pardon, because it effects it, or rather it is in the nature of the thing, so that we are to inquire into no hidden records; forgiveness of sins is not a secret sentence, a word, or a record; but it is a state of change, and effected upon us; and upon ourselves we are to look for it, to read it and understand it."²⁹

John's judgment of this was: "He appears to steer in the middle of the road exactly, to give assurance of pardon to the penitent, but to none else." By these words, Wesley meant Jeremy Taylor had avoided the two extremes: no knowable pardon for anyone in this world; and automatic or rhetorical pardon for everyone. He took Taylor to teach that the penitents only could be both pardoned and know they were forgiven.

Wesley's taking from Taylor the fact and assurance of pardon of sins indicates his judgment of what he himself needed. It is these two which constitute his future Aldersgate Street testimony. 'Tis important to mark this.

Equally significant is it to mark what Wesley disregards in Taylor's statement.

Editing it in a progression of experience produces this. Christ came to take away our sins. He would do this by turning men from their iniquities. So Peter preached. How Christ would turn men from sin, Peter did not say; nor did Taylor. However, since the turning is to be from iniquities to their opposites, the implication is that Christ should effect in men an ethical alteration from human sins to Christ's high

ethical conduct, as seen in His life, teaching, and dying in fidelity to His ideals. In this last only does the Cross enter the process.

Subsequent to this turning, pardon is a state of change, affected thereby upon men. This change means hatred of sin, growth in grace, sincerity of heart, and diligent endeavor in each. These add to a state composed of holiness, repentance and imperfection. All this composes one's pardon.

These also are the assurance of pardon. Pardon is not a secret sentence, a word, a record. There is no sign of it. It is in the nature of pardon itself to disclose itself. That disclosing nature is the experiences subsequent to one's turning, beginning with hatred of sin. To the degree one does and experiences these, he must judge himself to have been pardoned. Such is the evangelical pardon. That pardon is sanctification also.

Severest adverse criticism of Taylor's paragraph must admit the Biblical character of the teachings given. Admit it must also that his assembling of them is sound. Most charitable study of them here must acknowledge their seer is seeing through a glass darkly. The identifying of pardon with sanctification,³⁰ the small if any part accorded Christ's atoning death, the ascription to man of completely adequate power to "arrive at the state of holiness"³¹ and to decide he is pardoned,³² the character and content of holiness, and the omission of any assurance of his pardon coming from a Divine source into a man's spirit—these are serious limitations.

Unless his non-mention of them indicates otherwise, Wesley was now not too clear of Taylor's errata. Still, he saw in Taylor something better than the extremes. He saw the Bishop was aware of the better way. Straightening and clearing that way was not now in John Wesley's power, for he himself was and for some years would be a sample of Taylor's errors. At the present, he oversimplifies but extracts and unites two of the grand and first of possible Christian experiences—pardon of sin and assurance of it.

April 4, Mary Pendarves, writing to her sister Ann Granville, penned this picture of John Wesley: "I honour primitive Christianity." It is quite different from what he has been called as one of the Holy Club. Moreover, it is more accurate and will fit him more and more. The following June, she heard him preach and requested a copy of his sermon. It was not until August 10th that he could write, "Began transcribing sermon for Mrs. Pendarves." Four days later, he sent it to her.³³

August summons us to note another widening of the life and, indi-

rectly, of the quest of John Wesley. Earlier this summer, one of the Holy Club, William Morgan, told John that he had "called at the jail to see a man who was condemned for killing his wife; and that, from the talk he had with one of the debtors, he verily believed it would do much good if any one would be at the pains of now and then speaking with them." Wesley continues: "This he so frequently repeated, that, on the 24th of August, 1730,³⁴ my brother and I walked with him to the Castle. We were so well satisfied with our conversation there that we agreed to go thither once or twice a week. . . ."³⁵

Soon Morgan opened another field. "He desired me," Wesley's account continues, "to go with him to see a poor woman in the town who was sick. In this employment too, when we came to reflect upon it, we believed it would be worth while to spend an hour or two in a week. . . ."

Detail of their work, John stated thus: "We can't compass Thomas Burgess' liberty yet, though it seems to have a fairer show than formerly. On Sunday they had prayers, and a sermon at the Castle; on Christmas Day we hope they will have a dinner; and the Sunday after, a communion, as many of them as are desirous of it, and appear prepared for it."³⁶ Specific persons ministered to can be understood from these few mentioned by Dr. Church: "They melted the heart of a hardened old sheep-stealer. They encouraged one, Jempro, to read aloud to his fellow prisoners. They struggled to teach a horse-stealer to read. He was a slow scholar, but they persevered and taught him his letters. He was eager enough to learn, and one of them went to hear his lessons three times a week."³⁷ Peaceful co-operation from the denizens, however, was not always present; for this is Clayton's experience upon one later occasion: "Bocardo, I fear, grows worse upon my hands. They have done nothing but quarrel . . . and they carried matters so high on Saturday that the bailiffs were sent for, who ordered Tomlyns to be fettered and put in the dungeon."³⁸ Books, medicines and clothes, they brought the prisoners; paid the debts of some; and sought release for others.

A school for the "poorest children" of the town, they began, giving instruction for minds as well as clothes for bodies. By 1732, Benjamin Ingham had a class of forty-two children.

These were radical doings in the England of 1730. Her first prison reformer, John Howard, was now but a four-year-old London boy;³⁹ and his equally successful successor, the Quakeress Elizabeth Fry, would

not be born for exactly fifty years.⁴⁰ The prison-reform labor of these two will cover the British Isles and most of Europe. Before them, the Holy Club, spearheaded by William Morgan and directed by John Wesley, brought attention to the plight of prisoners by their ministrations: and they, in turn, could have been turned to prison work by the 1729 report upon some prison conditions by a committee of the House of Commons.

Lacking though the Holy Club's members were in any adequate and ordered comprehension of faith; and striving, though they were, for acceptance of God by their own works, it must be acknowledged their works were above average, sincere, courageous, forward-facing and vigorous. If any persons could be accepted of God for their own works, these young men would have achieved that experience. Their good deeds were of profit to those to whom they were done, but, for their aims for themselves, they profited their doers nothing except providing them with opportunity to discern the inability of one's works to merit acceptance with God. However, orthodox churchmen and unsatisfied seekers as they were, neither rigidity in the one nor intensity in the other blinded their eyes, hardened their hearts, or closed their hands from seeing, pitying, and ministering to the vast needs of the prisoned and the poor.

Here, then, are the beginnings of that complete and balanced pattern of the Christian faith—that is, faith and love, first received from and directed first to God in Christ; and then, completed by service to men. The irrefragable union of the two in New Testament teaching and example, along with the steady expression of that union, constitute the unique character of the personal experience and public work of John Wesley. Of all major modern Christian leaders, he was the most whole and the most balanced. If any, few have equaled him. None have surpassed him.

Yet this addition (not as a substitution) of service was not original with John Wesley. Nehemiah Curnock writes rightly: "Service for others did not form part of Wesley's original standard of holy living. It was Oxford Methodism that saved him from religious selfishness."⁴¹

Even more specific could Curnock be. It was William Morgan who saved Oxford Methodism from religious selfishness, especially saved therefrom its leader. Writing later of the ways in which God works indirectly, John Wesley would say: "It is generally his pleasure to work by his creatures; to help man by man."⁴² So was it here. William Morgan who,

"Cherished noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,"⁴³

but not before he had been the human instrument in the Lord's hand of putting into John Wesley's life initial practice and conviction of serving as inherent in, and complementary to, any life fit to be designated as Christian. It is his enduring memorial.

August 28th, Mary Pendarves' letter to John Wesley has a postscript from her sister, Ann: "I hope to see this beautiful hymn in verse according to a promise. . . . I take this to be a plain translation, as near the author's sense as the language will bear. . . ." Here John has begun translation of hymns.

Writing to Ann, age 23, on September 27th, he discloses himself as his quest then was: "Every day since my return hither I have been engaged in business of far greater concern than life or death."

This momentous business is most likely the confession further on in the same letter: "I am afraid of nothing more than of growing old too soon, of having my body worn out before my soul is past childhood. Would it not be terrible to have the wheels of life stand still, when we had scarce started for the goal; before the work of the day was half done, to have the night come, wherein no man can work? I shiver at the thought of losing my strength before I have found; to have my senses fail ere I have a stock of rational pleasures; my blood cold ere my heart is warmed with virtue! Strange, to look back on a train of years that have passed, 'as an arrow through the air,' without leaving any mark behind them, without our being able to trace them in our improvement!" One recalls here Wesley's commencement of his *Diary* in April, 1725, when he examined weekly his soul's state. "Every Saturday night," says Curnock, "he held an inquisition with regard to his own religious experience. It was a private Saturday-night 'band-meeting,' his Lord and his own soul being, as yet, the only members of the band." "⁴⁴ Such a personal spiritual inquisition, Wesley now holds with Ann Granville. His known letters contain nothing like this, not even those to his mother.

The substrata of his soul are bared here. His aims are these: to progress spiritually beyond childhood, to get further on towards his goal than its mere beginning; to finish the less than half of the day's work; to find something before strength fails; to gather a stock of rational pleasures; to have his heart warmed with virtue.

The theme of these is: though he is beginning to be estimated by others as quite perfect, he himself senses or realizes he is in his quest a mere child, a beginner, a laborer for less than half a day. He discloses, in writing thus to another, the frankness and honesty with which, all his life, he will keep with reference to himself, his people, and his work. It will be known as his "openness." Unsparing, it will be ever but also accompanied by a kindliness, a love, a patience, a willingness and ability to explain to any the bases of his life and work.

Along with this theme, there exists a fear, a dread, agonizing in its intensity, that his life will not last long enough for him to reach that definitely sensed but indefinitely defined something of whose indispensable possession he is so overwhelmingly aware. It is a matter indeed "far greater than life or death."

He conceives the attainment of this something as requiring a long period of time. This common mistake is made as a result of three misunderstandings. The first is his idea that the only means by which this something can be had is his own human aspiration and effort. For human effort, there is ample and proper place in the New Testament: taking it out of that place is losing effort and goal. Such misplacement is Wesley's fault right here.

His second misconception, basic to the first, is that his frank review of five years of increasingly intense effort has shown him how very little he has advanced. All they now mean is this: they are gone "without leaving any mark behind them, without his being able to trace in them any improvement." Logically and naturally, then, he would wonder whether or not the remainder of his life would be long enough for him to achieve that sensed something.

Scarcely can his third source of defeat in the progress of attaining be termed a misconception. It is a complete ignorance, though not a willful one. This ignorance is of the grace, mercy, love of a holy and just God; of the Cross as atoning; of the availability of that atonement by faith alone; and of inner and incontestable assurance of one's pardon. All this means justification. That all this is a finished work of God, who of His grace makes it a free gift to man, apart from any works or reputed worthiness of man, receivable by faith alone, which reception is immediate in time—this he does not know. He will be told of its immediacy but will not believe it until his searching again the Scriptures convinces him.

One needs to note carefully what, at this time in his quest, his goals are. They are two: to acquire a "stock of rational pleasures" and to

have his "heart warmed with virtue." What these rational pleasures were, he does not specify; but the phrase has a worldly quality, redeemed by the adjective "rational." The second objective is the first appearance of a solid and enduring part of this something which becomes experience in 1738. Its presence here in the company of pleasures is an instance of the coexistence of polar disparities in his quest. Others will appear later. For the present, note the mention this early part of the culmination of his quest. Whatever warmth he had in mind was mediated or generated by virtue, not by any divine visitation.

Early autumn of 1730 saw another book begin its salutary working in his quest and life. It was a new book, published two years before, entitled *The Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding*, and written by Dr. Peter Browne, Bishop of Cork. "Many references in the *Diary* show how diligently Wesley was reading the Bishop of Cork's book."⁴⁵

It is likely he commended this book to the Granville sisters in the same month. However, by October 3rd, he writes Mary Pendarves to acknowledge his deserving a "severe censure" for his recommending to them this book. He admits he had read then "but a few pages," whose beauties alone he saw. Further reading and "closer examination" have discovered "imperfections . . . fallacies . . . falsehoods . . . contradictions." These make him regret his former approval of the book. He promises "reparation of the injury" by an "abridgment." It was done by Christmas Eve,⁴⁶ and on February 18, 1731, she acknowledges receiving it, says she wished she could have heard him read it to her, and hopes for his explanations to enlighten her understanding of it.

The bearing of it upon Wesley's quest is at the point of the powers and limits of man's reason in matters religious, in the possessing that something he is seeking.

By now, this account of John Wesley's quest has furnished sufficient data for concluding that intellect was a strong and, for years to come, the dominant phase of his personality. The high point of its exaltation is in his letter of July 29, 1725, part of the pertinent paragraph of which bears repetition: "I call faith an assent upon rational grounds, because I hold divine testimony to be the most reasonable of all evidence whatever. Faith must necessarily at length be resolved into reason. . . ."

Above,⁴⁷ it has been seen that, the next August 18th, his mother introduced him to knowing by divine revelation and to assent thereto upon the fact of revelation. In November, John agrees. There, an esti-

mate of the wide significance of Susannah Wesley's probably bringing her son to his first encounter with revelation as the only way to a certain area of knowledge was made. At that time, five years ago, that son accepted her estimate of revelation as God's communicating truth, which "may not be evinced by reason."

How far either mother or son knew what they had done is not said at the time. A later and competent biographer stated its meaning in this way: the Methodist movement was effective "in bringing to an end, or at least in reducing to comparative insignificance, the eighteenth century as the so-called 'Age of Reason.'" ⁴⁸

A sketch of contemporary Western background is needful to measure this estimate. That Age of Reason began with Descartes' thesis: "I think, therefore I am."⁴⁹ Its effect, Durant states, "now began the great game of epistemology, which . . . waxed into a 'Three Hundred Years' War. . . ."⁵⁰ The great warriors were Spinoza (1632-77), John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), Joseph Butler (1692-1752) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The battlelines of these warriors, it is not necessary to detail here.⁵¹ It is required to note their battlefield was the mode by which knowledge is gotten. Part of such knowledge is of things unseen, including religious concerns. How do we validly know of these? By reason? So John Wesley appears to have thought, until he read his mother's letter of August 18, 1725. By November, he has accepted revelation as an added mode.

His mother's declaration was approved, doubtless, by John's reading of Bishop Browne's book. It was used often by him down the years. In January, 1756, he quoted from it in refuting William Law.⁵² The ensuing December, he was reading it to his preachers.⁵³ In 1771, he uses approvingly Browne's allocation of mystery in the Trinity.⁵⁴ For the present, it made him aware of reason's limitations and ready to allow place to revelation. One of Browne's chapters was upon "Improvement of Knowledge by Revelation."

Except for his admission that some things are to be accepted, because God has revealed them, John Wesley at the time said naught more of the provinces of the two. It is certain he kept, as ways to truth, both reason and revelation. His mature delineation of their powers is found in his sermons: "The Imperfection of Human Knowledge," and "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered."⁵⁵

John Wesley's quest now is widened by Peter Browne's book to comprise a second means of finding the something he seeks. It narrows the human intellectual powers of the man to their proper area but engulfs,

transcends, co-labors with those powers, producing insight into, experience, and understanding of the words, ways and will of God as otherwise are impossible.⁵⁶

The closing months of 1730 saw a few other phases of Wesley's seeking.

Rapid expansion of the Holy Club's prison and community work required some other approval. In late August or early September, John wrote his father for his judgment of this work. He answered on September 28th and heartily approved: "I have the highest reason to bless God that He has given me two sons together in Oxford to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil. . . ." ⁵⁷ He advised them: "Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully. . . ." His administrative counsel was that they consult the involved clerical officials. He received approval.

By October 18th, the club became, at Merton College, a "common topic of mirth," part of which was due to the ignorant imputation to the club of "customs" to which its members were "utter strangers." So begins an opposition which will pursue the Wesleys and the Methodists far into the future.

Late in November or early December, William Morgan opened a field for wider service in Bocardo, a debtors' jail above the north gate of Oxford.⁵⁸

Concerning John himself, there are these items.

To Mary Pendarves, he had the "appearance of some perfection": but on November 25, John declares this imperfection: "I am sick of pride; it quite weighs my spirits down." His father's understanding his sons in their prison work and religious practices to be instruments of God calls forth John's quandary: "To have an habitual lively sense of our being only instruments in His hand. . . . But how to affix this sense in us is the great question. . . . To man this is impossible. . . ."

December 12, he writes to Mary Pendarves on God's requirement. God "does not always require wisdom and prudence. Some degree of purity He does always require in those who would move or speak to His glory." And purity is: "The race which I am but lately entered upon, if indeed I am entered yet." So much pertains to himself.

Her letter implied that she, too, desired to attain purity and hinted a want of his "example and instruction." The latter, he gave thus: "Our ultimate end is the love of God. . . . To communicate every possible time . . . to pray without ceasing. . . . Not to be content with our solemn devotions, public or private. . . . At all times and in all places

to make fervent returns 'by ejaculations and abrupt intercourses of the mind with God,' if it be only by a word, a thought, a look." All these are, of course, his own practices.

Having written them, he adds this self-revealing sentence: "To account whatever frailty remains after this a necessary incumbrance of flesh and blood, such an one as God out of His mercy to us will not yet remove, as seeing it to be useful though grievous; yet still to hope that since we seek Him . . . , He will in His good time quell the raging of this sea. . . ."

At the close of 1730, then, former practices continue. Former attainment is no higher. Holiness or purity is an aim, not a possession. Existent imperfection is a "necessary incumbrance." Yet this he senses must be removable and, therefore, he hopes for it. That hope he now bases upon his own mere seeking. Revelation, though he has become a "man of one book," is but an idea, accepted but not operative. His "one book" is still a closed book.

CHAPTER TEN

1731

DURING THIS year John Wesley's quest advances little, if any, distance forward. Instead, it is driven to attend to distances already traveled, whose route he is forced to explain and to justify. Doing so will involve the Granville sisters, especially Mary, and himself: himself and others—the Kirkhams and the Oxford seniors, primarily. He will rise to the occasion. Thus, his quest will widen, not in any fresh area of his personal religious practice but in the reach of, and in the opposition to, what he has found to date for himself.

Meantime, routine will continue. Its variations will be a visit to the sisters in London during February¹ and a journey, both ways by foot, to Epworth, between April 14 and May 12.²

The thesis of this year will be: Is John Wesley, is the Holy Club too strict? This thesis will raise the other underlying question, "What are the limits of Christian liberty?"

The latter question arose first, and did so in connection with the Granville sisters' visit with a brother in London. The Granvilles were of the nobility, and Mary Pendarves, in addition, was a woman of high character. Consequently, she was part of the social whirl of the city, as witness her letter of January 15th to John Wesley: "I have but a moment's time . . . I am called away. Ought I not to be ashamed to send such a hasty scrawl? . . ." A visit of the two Wesleys was set for the afternoon of January 30, but was postponed to the following Monday afternoon, when she hopes they will be able to visit her "for an hour or two."

Though short, their meeting was lengthy enough for association with her to effect "many changes" in John and Charles. She "nobly assisted them in their great work in wearing off several stains from our nature." Observant John did not fail to note the hindrance of her social activities:

"London is the worst place under heaven for preserving a Christian temper." Yet he is sure her affections are "reserved for sublimer objects."

She, however, appeared not to be what he thought she was. April 4, after admitting, "For two months past we have lived in a perpetual hurry," she throws into his lap this: "Every Sunday evening there is a gentleman in this town has a concert of music. I am invited there tonight, and design to go. I charge you, on the friendship you have professed for me, tell me your sincere opinion about it and all your objections. For if I am in error by going, you ought to prevent my doing so again."

Ten days later, he answered.

He regards her "lovely freedom" in asking his counsel as the "greatest of obligations"; is sure no "circumstance of life shall ever give the enemy an advantage over" her; and hints his reply might cost him her friendship. "I greatly wish," he continues, "I may be able to give a full answer to the question you so obligingly propose; but a direct one I can't give, unless such an one may be deduced from any of the following considerations."

His counsel runs this way: "To judge whether any action be lawful on the Sabbath or no, we are to consider whether it advances the end for which that was ordained. Now, the end for which the Sabbath was ordained is the attainment of holiness. Whatever therefore tends to advance this end is lawful on this day: whatever does not tend to advance this end is not lawful on this day.

"Two things we may infer hence: (1) That works of mercy are lawful on this day; for they directly tend to advance this end, to make us holy as God is holy. (2) That works of necessity are lawful on this day; of which there are two sorts: first, works which we ought to do but cannot do on another day; secondly, works that or works the neglect of which would obstruct this end, for whatever can't be omitted without hindering it do indirectly tend to advance it. One of these, to those who can't perform the offices of religion so well without it, is giving themselves some diversion from it. But of this we may observe that, it being therefore allowed because it tends to advance the end of the day, it is allowable so far and no farther as it does tend to it, to our advance in holiness."

From this, Mary Pendarves was to arrive at a direct answer. Wesley is clear and sound enough about the purpose of the Sabbath: the attainment of holiness. This is his own grand aim in his quest. His first deduction from his premise is sound. However, the ensuing occasions rest upon the human qualities of spirit, character, knowledge, judgment,

self-control, self-sacrifice. Wesley has no mention of the pertinent Commandment of God. His implying, at least, that religion can be enjoyed better by some only through diversion from it reminds one of some of the counsels of Fénelon to some serious members of the profligate court of Louis XIV of France. There arises a suspicion that desire to keep the friendship of Mrs. Pendarves had too much weight in Wesley's advice.

Holy Club ways are attacked from within the university. John Whitehead's report of it reads: "In the beginning of the year 1732, a meeting was held by several of the seniors of the college, to consult on the speediest way to stop the progress of enthusiasm in it. Mr. Wesley and his friends did not learn what was the result of this very pious consultation; but it was soon publicly reported, that Dr.—and the Censors were going to blow up the Godly Club."³

Note a contrast here. A little more than a year ago, certain university officials, dismayed at the moral conditions of the school, had taken action to combat it. Pursuant to this, the absent fellows were required to return. John Wesley did so promptly. His leadership soon bore fruit in a small group of students, highly exemplary academically, morally and religiously. Now another university group plans to destroy this work. Their immediate weapon is name-calling: "Enthusiasts," "Godly Club." John's brother Samuel referred to it as "the execrable consultation."⁴

Ten days after their return from Epworth, on May 22,⁵ John and Charles visited the Kirkhams. Hitherto, these occasions appear to have been mutually highly agreeable, the Kirkhams leading and dominating the brothers, especially through the books they commended. Through Robert Kirkham, student and member of the Holy Club, the family knew of student and senior-fellow objection to the Wesley way. On this visit, that criticism was the major subject of discussion. June 11th, John reported it to his mother.

"When we were with him," John wrote, "we touched two or three times upon a nice subject, but did not come to any full conclusion. The point debated was, what is the meaning of being 'righteous over much,' or by the more common phrase of being 'too strict in religion'? and what danger there was of any of us falling into that extreme?" It is probable that Mr. Kirkham began the subject, perhaps with John and Charles. His mention of "our opponents" indicates that others stood with Mr. Kirkham; and his phrase, "My brother and I," implies that the other Kirkhams stood with the father.

Indicative of the Kirkham position is the phrase, "righteous over much." It comes from Ecclesiastes 7:16. In that book it is one of the five statements of the pleasure-form of living.⁶ It somberly reports the author's disillusionment concerning the utter inadequacy of pleasure to satisfy, and in this phrase counsels a middle way—similar to the "golden mean" of the Roman poet Horace.⁷

The discussions discovered these forms of being "too righteous." 1. "Carrying some particular virtue to so great an height as to make it clash with some others"—that is disbalance.⁸ 2. "Laying too much stress on the instituted means of grace, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law"⁹—that is, piety without comporting ethics. 3. "Multiplying prudential means upon ourselves so far, and binding ourselves to the observance of them so strictly, as to obstruct the end we aimed at by them, either by hindering our advance in heavenly affections in general or by retarding our progress in some particular virtue"—that is, allowing the increase of noncommanded means to retard growth or increase in spirit, or feeling.

The Kirkhams deemed this third as the danger of the Wesleys: "Our opponents seemed to think my brother and I in some danger of being too strict in this last sense—of laying burthens on ourselves too heavy to be born, and consequently too heavy to be of any use to us." The Kirkhams did not object to increased use of the ordained means of grace—communing, worship, Bible reading, prayer. They were against his, to them, extras; to him, "prudential" or wise aids. He comments to Susannah: "It is easy to observe that almost everyone thinks that rule totally needless which he does not need himself; and as to the Christian spirit itself, almost everyone calls that degree of it which he does not himself aim at, 'enthusiasm.'" Wanting to comprehend this matter "with as much accuracy as possible," he asks her judgment "speedily." Any reply of hers is not extant.

Two facts are to be noted about this visit of the Wesleys to the Kirkhams. The first is that neither John nor Charles made any reply to the Kirkhams' judgment of their current religious ways. The other is that their visits to Stanton appear to end with this one. Are these facts related? Did John's silence and cessation of visits evidence his realization that they were opposed strongly to his new course and that now there was a deep division between them?

That such was the case is seen in two later contacts. In 1739, eight years after this visit, Charles Wesley was in Gloucester on his way to the field where he preached. "He was suddenly confronted by a lady

who stood in his way. She cried, 'What, Mr. Wesley, is it you I see? Is it possible that you who can preach at Christ Church, St. Mary's, etc., should come hither after a mob?' He looked at her and said, 'The work which my Master giveth me, must I not do it?' She was his old and intimate friend, Mrs. Kirkham."¹⁰ Since a June day in 1731, her unsympathetic attitude had only increased.

Thirteen years after that discussion at Stanton, on Sunday, March 15, 1752, John Wesley with his wife Molly¹¹ and his fifteen-year-old step-daughter Jenny mounted horses to ride to Evesham. There, he preached in the Town Hall. Present were some gentry and clergy, one of the latter being John's old friend and one of the first members of the Holy Club. March 18th, Robert Kirkham, now rector at Stanton, and John rode to Stanton, where he had not been "for upwards of twenty years."¹² There, he met an aunt of Kirkham's who, John says, "Could not long forbear telling me how sorry she was that I should leave all my friends to lead this vagabond life." His answer, Simon judges,¹³ "lifts the veil covering his deepest thoughts." It was: "Why, indeed it is not pleasing to flesh and blood; and I would not do it if I did not believe there was another world." She disputed the matter but did not "continue long" and it ended "in much love." Charles did not alter the mother at Bristol; at Stanton, John altered the aunt.

The nephew, Robert, also did John alter. That evening, he and John returned to Evesham, where Robert Kirkham heard Wesley preach then and also at five o'clock the next morning. At parting, the two walked from the preaching room. John tells: "It was sometime before he could speak. He then broke out, 'I am to take care of two thousand souls, and I never yet knew how to take care of my own!'" Apparently, Wesley spoke closely with him, for he ends by reporting, "I left him full of conviction and good resolutions. How many days will they continue?"¹⁴

Thus separated the Kirkhams and Wesley.

Along with continuing routines, there are things pertinent to his quest. June 12, Dr. Morley died—"the death of one of the best friends I had in the world,"¹⁵ he said. Soon, accentuated by this experience,¹⁶ death will continue to become a potent evidence in Wesley's judging the effectiveness of his quest.

June 17, a letter to Ann Granville contained this: "No pain approaches a Christian but to pave the way for more than equal pleasure." He made to her this quite strange and inconsistent comment upon some cultural "plan of female life" drawn up by Sally Kirkham: it

"must have pleased all the thinking part of her sex, had she not prescribed so much of two dull things, reading and religion." Was it sarcasm? Or a despondency over the fruitlessness of his quest?

It is best to view that statement from what he said in the next paragraph. He wrote that Ann had proposed to "attain another end in reading than throwing away a few leisure hours." From this, it is quite true that Sally Kirkham's plan had no higher purpose than the killing of time—her means of doing it was better than others, but the end was the same. Ann, however, is aiming at "indifference to the things of this world." His evaluation of this reveals John himself: "Why, that is everything! that is to be happy, to be renewed in the image in which we were created, to have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus." This is far more than Sally Kirkham meant. She was a Kirkham, and it has been seen that, at this time, none of the Kirkhams were favorable to John Wesley's ways. Again, it might be more than Ann Granville meant, though her letters to him show her to have been closer to John's mind. Here, his mind is this. He wants to be indifferent to this world: that constitutes happiness, renewal in the image of man as created first and possession of the mind of Christ. All this is a something to be reached. He has nothing here of any means by which it is to be reached.

The world to come is thrust upon his attention by Ann's sister. June 16th, she wrote him of her knowing a friend of "excellent understanding, learning, humanity and of good qualities" but also of religious opinions which shock her. "They allow our Saviour to be a great prophet, but divest Him of divinity; admire the Scriptures, but call every part that mentions the Trinity fictitious." She asks, "What do you say that man's state is with regard to the next world?" It smacks of the diverting query of the woman of Samaria.¹⁷ June 19th, he answers. Quoting the teaching of the Church, "This faith except everyman keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," he wrote: "Such an one has nothing to hope for from the terms of the Gospel." Still, he continued, "We have no authority to judge: that, God alone has."

July sees him renewing his need to know the falsity or truth of the criticism of his ways as too strict. As seen above, two months ago, student derision was abetted by academic action and Kirkham criticism. He had urgently asked, five weeks ago, his mother's judgment of those ways. If she answered, her letter is lost to date. Wesley's next seeking judgment is directed to Mary Pendarves on July 29th.

He asks her not to blame him "for using every means to find whether

he is guilty or no; and particularly for appealing to the judgment of one who in this is not likely to be prejudiced in his favor," since the court circles in which she moved "are not accused of too much strictness. Whatever other ill weeds may flourish there, a court is not fit soil "for religious strictness." He begs, "Give me leave, then, to lay freely before you what my sentiments in this point are, and to conjure you to tell me with the same freedom which of them you disapprove of."

Except its last paragraph, the remainder of this letter contains a statement of the principles governing his religious practices. Part of this he reiterates in a later letter to his brother Samuel; but, since this one is fuller, it is quoted here.

"I have been charged with being too strict, with carrying things too far in religion, and laying burthens on myself, if not on others, which were neither necessary nor possible to be borne. A heavy charge indeed! To be too strict! That is to blaspheme the law of God as not strict enough. To carry duties too far! Why, what is this but to change holiness itself into extravagance? To impose unnecessary burthens! Then am I an hinderer as well as slanderer of the religion I live to recommend; then have I added to the words of God's Book, and He shall add to me all the plagues that are written in it.¹⁸

"My present sense is this: I was made to be happy: to be happy I must love God; in proportion to my love of whom my happiness must increase. To love God I must be like Him, holy as He is holy; which implies both the being pure from vicious and foolish passions and the being confirmed in those virtuous and rational affections which God comprises in the word 'charity.' In order to root those out of my soul and plant these in their stead, I must use (1) such means as are ordered by God; (2) such as are recommended by experience and reason.

"Thus far I believe we are all agreed; but in what follows we are not: for (1) as to the end of my being, I lay it down for a rule that I can't be too happy or therefore holy; and infer thence that the more steadily I keep my eye upon the prize of our high calling the better, and the more of my thoughts and words and actions are directly pointed at the attainment of it. (2) As to the instituted means, I likewise lay it down for a rule that as 'none teach like God,' so there are none like them; and consequently that I am to use them every time I may, and with all the exactness I can. As to prudential means, I believe this rule holds—of things indifferent in themselves, whatever hinders the extirpating my vile affections or the transferring my rational ones to proper objects, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be abstained from,

however familiar and pleasing: again of things indifferent in themselves, whatever helps me to conquer vicious and advance in virtuous affections, that to me is not indifferent, but to be embraced, be it ever so difficult or painful. These are the points which I am said to carry too far; whether I do or no, I beg you would not delay to inform me."¹⁹

Mostly, this is an ordered résumé. Noteworthy is his grand fundamental: the love of God, as producing happiness and as requiring holiness. September, 1730, his letter to Ann Granville included in his aims the acquisition of a "stock of rational pleasures." Now that appears to be changed to "rational affections," whose mention in relation to charity or the love of God allows them if not a quality, a direction which redeems the phrase from the more hedonistic implication of the one of a year ago.

Two days later, she replied. Detailing and decrying the whirl amidst which she lived, she admits her "lot is fallen among those who cannot be accused of too much strictness in religion" but who "generally make an open profession of having no religion at all." Of what he wrote, she had only this to say: "How noble a defense you make, and how you are adorned with the beauty of holiness! You really are in a state to be envied; but you deserve the happiness you possess, and far be it from me to envy such excellence. I am not presumptuous enough to desire the knowledge and strength of reason that you are endowed with by nature, and that you have carefully cultivated and improved. But I pray to God to give me an humble and contrite spirit, to let me taste of the crumbs that fall from His table."

That is: John is already holy and happy—a judgment based upon the distance she is religiously behind him. She does not measure him by the standard of the Scriptures.

His letter to her of July 29th is as self-depreciatory as was hers to him. "You have kept yourself unspotted from the world: I am sullied with many stains . . . the penitent can't avoid being left behind by the innocent!" His former ire at Jeremy Taylor's claiming humility requires one to regard himself as the "worst in every company" has vanished before the character of Mary Pendarves, as he insists she was.

"I am extremely happy in having your approbation," he adds. Then, apropos of her writing of his critics, "The imputation thrown you is a most extraordinary one," he exults: "Give me the censure of the many and the praise of the few. . . . One that is learning Christ should never think censure an evil. No; it is a gracious gift of a wise Father to His children: it is subservient to the noblest purposes; in particular to the

attainment of humility, which in order to holiness is all in all. . . . By this alone may we judge of the value of censure: God hath so constituted this world that, so soon as ever any one sets himself earnestly to seek a better, censure is at hand to conduct him to it. Nor can the fools cease to count his life madness till they have confirmed him in the wisdom of the just."²⁰

About this paragraph upon censure, there might have been at the time of its writing a bit of bombast. However, in view of the fact that, in spite of desertion by friends and of persecution by foes, he will hold true to the Gospel indicates he had even now some sense of the inability of such people to harm effectually either him or his work. He is in error in his claim that God purposely set censure in creation as a guide to the better. The truth is: one who will can make criticism a hindrance or a help. For example, censure can help to keep one humble but other base passions are oft its result. His union of humility and holiness is soundly Scriptural.

Anent the many things taking her time, he gave time this fine characterization: "Time for which there is no equivalent but eternity."

Overlaid but not expunged by this rising criticism of Wesley's strict ways are a few other items.

He is about free of "trifling acquaintance"²¹—even of neutral company—"Those choicest instruments of mischief, 'they that do no harm.'"²² Upon Mary Pendarves, he urges aggressive action: "Remember that we are to resist, not to stand still; that they who would overcome are not barely to repel, but likewise to return the darts of the enemy; that to be innocent we are to be active, to avoid evil we must do good, and if it be possible in that very particular wherein we are solicited to evil."

Current areas for such vigorous advance are: "Hath the fool said aloud, 'There is no God'? So much the rather let us prove there is one. Is His son degraded into an equality with the sons of men? The more zealously let us assert His equality with God. Do any blaspheme His Word? That is our time to show that not otherwise under heaven can we obtain salvation." That is: fight back by a reaffirmation of what is denied as true.²³

She asked Wesley's counsel for a "particular friend" who is physically ill; spiritually, discontented, melancholy; and religiously dissatisfied because of coldness in prayer, wandering thoughts and "agonies . . . the week before she receives the sacrament." His replies, which reflect his own religious thought and experience to date, are these: pray more

often; commune more often. Certain other of his positions are fresh additions: "Too tender a conscience is a glorious excess . . . yet it is an excess."

Very curious is his counsel directly upon cold praying and agonized communing. "As to this I would ask first: 'Can you help it?' If not, do you think God is good? If He be, He can't be displeased at what you can't avoid. That would be to be angry at Himself, since 'tis His will, not yours, that you are not more attentive." Is it really John Wesley who so advises? Where does he find any reasonable and much more any Scriptural basis for asserting God wills any one to be inattentive and cold in prayer? Human weakness can so result: but does not God spare the bruised reed? One's praying can be cold through some underlying quality of the one praying:²⁴ but to make a blanket statement that the presence of such defeating qualities is God's will is to traduce the Heavenly Father and to destroy any vital praying. John Wesley's words here can be put easily into a logical form. Perhaps his logical ability betrayed him. If so, it exemplifies the fact of logic's limitations. Nothing can be more untrue than logic. Naught can be more dumb than brains. In the course of Wesley's quest, this illustrates the wide fluctuations of its present course.

His second counsel is: "Next I would ask: 'Do you expect while upon earth to be as the angels of God in heaven?'"²⁵ If not, you must expect to have a share in that infirmity which no one quite shakes off till he leaves earth behind him. . . . Your friend's case appears to be this: God, seeing the earnestness of heart with which she chooses virtue, sees that she is a fit object for a large measure of His blessed Spirit. As a preparative for this, He sends this pain (whether the immediate cause of it be in her body or mind) to cleanse her from all remaining sinful affections and to balance all those temptations that might prevent her pressing forward to that degree of holiness which becomes them whom God thus delights to honour. If so, it will continue with her till it has had its perfect work."

Weakness ended only by death; earnest-hearted choice of virtue, fitness for reception of the Holy Spirit, pain as preparative, pain as cleansing one from sinful affections, pain as balancing temptations—these are the utmost reach of John Wesley now. Placed alongside the good news of the Gospel of the grace and power of God, these are despairingly deficient. This, he now knows not. Yet he himself will not rest with these counsels. Realization of their inadequacy will drive him on.

There are further risings and fallings. Luther's sturdiness²⁶ appears

in his writing to Ann Granville, "Means can do nothing without His word."²⁷ A better view of death reads, "'Tis not strange that one who knows how to live should not be afraid to die."²⁸ In this year 1731, he can say this of another, but it will be years ere he can do so of himself.

Humility still engages him. Its opposites are vanity and pride. These are relatives: pride regards "our opinion of ourselves, vanity the opinions of other men concerning us." Pride is "immoderate self-esteem"; vanity, "immoderate desire of the esteem of others." Attainment of humility is put thus: "How to infuse this God knows. With men it is impossible." An important admission, that is. It confesses man's limitation and also acknowledges God's ability. Such an incipient shift of power from man to God John will be compelled to widen greatly: he will do it. His present idea of God's way of infusing humility into man is suffering. "This is the surest, it is the shortest way, as to all virtue, so particularly to humility, the distinguishing virtue of Christians, the sole inlet to all virtue."²⁹

October 3rd, he will fall back upon sincerity: "Our hope is sincerity, not perfection." Sincerity means to "do our best"; perfection, to "do well." Such a lowering of aim must expect sin. How, then, does God deal with that sin? He loosely quotes Psalm 130:3, "If God were to mark all that is done amiss, who could abide it?" Not even Paul could, who though "ripe for paradise" declared he was not "already made perfect."³⁰ Wesley located Paul this way: "Perfect, indeed, he was from sin, strictly speaking, which is a voluntary breach of a known law;³¹ at least from habits of such sin: as to single acts, he knew whom he had believed. He knew who had promised to forgive these, not seven times but seventy times seven. Nay, a thousand times a thousand, if they sincerely desire it, shall all sins be forgiven unto the sons of men. We need except none. . . ."

A third reply to his critics occurs this year in November. Now the person is one of his own family, his brother Samuel. He was a very capable man: a poet, scholar, teacher all his life, and quite high-church. He was a stickler for regularity, order.³² From this last characteristic, arose his objections to John's present ways. From John's letter to Samuel, there appear the criticisms of the latter and the answers of the former.

He writes Samuel he had been warned of the probability of opposition when he was ordained priest on September 22, 1728. Then he had been examined by Dr. Hayward, who said: "Do you know what you are

about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian priest ought to know that, whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him." He is not surprised at such opposition from infidels and half-Christians. "But is it not hard," he asks, "that even those that are with us should be against us? that a man's enemies (in some degree) should be those of the same household of faith?" His brother is now against him.

"In some degree" only is Samuel so; for John adds, "In most we seem to agree already; especially as to rising, not keeping much company, and sitting by a fire." Samuel did not like John's long hair, down to his shoulders. Others objected mostly to his keeping few companions, his scrupulous care of money, and his refusing to waste his time.

He rebuts criticisms by explaining his positions.

His reply to the charge that he is too strict in employing means not required is the same as that of July 19th. With this, there ends the parallel between his letters of that date and this one of November. The latter is not so much engrossed with specific practices as with the bearing of the man himself.

1. "I am whimsical." If this means singularity, he agrees. If it mean being so without reason, he denies this completely. He does not differ "wilfully" from others. He will "extremely thank any one who will teach him to help it." Then there is this glimpse of himself: "Can I totally help it (being singular), till I have more breeding or prudence? to neither of which I am much disposed naturally; and I fear my acquired stock of either will give me small assistance." Not all were repulsed by this criticism of Wesley. John Gambold tells that an old friend of his regaled him with an account of the "whimsical Mr. Wesley, his preciseness and pious extravagances." The historian adds this sequel: "This led him to seek Charles Wesley's room. They became fast friends. He was introduced to John, and joined the Holy Club."³³

2. He is accused of "being formal." If by that he meant that "I am not easy and unaffected enough in my carriage, it is very true; but how shall I help it? I cannot be genteelly behaved by instinct; and if I am to try after it by experience and observation of others, that is not the work of a month but of years.

"If by formal he meant that I am serious, that too is very true; but why should I help it? Mirth, I grant, is fit for you; but does it follow that it is fit for me? Are the same tempers, any more than the same

words or actions, fit for all circumstances? You are glad, because you are 'passed from death to life';³⁴ well, but let him be afraid who knows not whether he is to live or die."

John Wesley admits, then, that beneath his singularity there is a quality of his nature which cannot be taken as good breeding or genteel instinct. More significant is his assertion that his practices and his generally serious temper derive from a fear of an untimely death—that is, a demise before he has found what religiously he senses he ought to have.

December, 1731, has a significant reference to John Wesley's poetry, his "poetic herd," as he or Ann Granville designated it, and also to "Araspes' hymn"—that is, one by Charles Wesley—which she described as "quite charming."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUPERFICIALLY, THE year 1732 in Wesley's quest was quiet, except for attention given the Holy Club. In the depths of that quest, John's condition was like that of the Reubenites in the days of Deborah and Barak: "For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart . . . great searchings of heart."¹ The quest will not widen but will intensify itself upon one grand part of the Christian faith. Widening will occur in the public relations of the Holy Club. Letters in this year are very few. Those to the Granville sisters will cease until 1734; then they will be ended by Wesley himself. Dominant correspondence is between John Wesley and Richard Morgan, Sr., father of William Morgan of the Holy Club. That group is in the center of the stage which comprises Oxford and London.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is that part of the Gospel in which Wesley's quest will be intensified this year. Details are found in his letter of February 28th to his mother, and in his sermon, "The Duty of Constant Communion."² These two, though upon the same subject, differ: the letter deals with John himself and the sacrament; the sermon, with the duties of all with reference to partaking thereof.

Before presenting each, the setting of the subject at this time is worthy of consideration. In 1788, John wrote under the title of this sermon a note: "The following discourse was written above five and fifty years ago, for the use of my pupils at Oxford. I have added very little, but retrenched much; as I then used more words than I do now. But I thank God, I have not yet seen cause to alter my sentiments in any point which is therein delivered." By "retrenching," he means he shortened what he had written earlier. However, the shortening did not alter his understanding and teaching concerning the sacrament of communion. In Oxford, students were placed under fellows. Each fellow was responsible for them, both academically and religiously. The sermon attests Wesley's earnest attempt to meet the latter.

His statement that he wrote this sermon "more than fifty-five years ago" would put it before 1733. How long before? Tyerman states that both letter and sermon were written in February, 1732.³ Recall, now, it was regular and increasing reception of the Lord's Supper which first began to mark him off from other students. Recall, too, such weekly communing was part of the strictness or singularity, about which arose student jibes and, last May, serious criticism from the closest of his friends—the Kirkhams. That criticism he had threshed over with his mother, Mary Pendarves and brother Samuel. By this February, 1732, he is sure enough of the importance and place of the communion to answer his opponents. The theme of that answer is the title's term, "Constant." He began with those for whom he was officially, immediately, and primarily responsible—his students.

His sermon's text was from Luke 22:19, "Do this in remembrance of me." It has a brief introduction of four sentences; and two sections: I, showing that constant communion was a duty; II, answering common objections. Part I has six paragraphs; Part II, twenty-two.

He does not wonder that "men who have no fear of God, should never think" of communing constantly. "But it is strange that it should be neglected by any that do fear God, and desire to save their souls: and yet nothing is more common." He wants to "bring these well meaning men to a more just way of thinking."

To do so, Wesley asserted that communing was a duty, first, because doing so is a "plain command of Christ." The text commands, "Do this." The word "remembrance" apparently meant continuance to John; for he continues, "As the apostles were obliged to bless, break, and give the bread to all that joined, so were all Christians obliged to receive those signs of Christ's body and blood." Such was the practice of "the first Christians, with whom the Christian sacrifice was a constant part of the Lord's day's service. And for several centuries they received it almost every day: four times a week always, and every saint's day besides. Accordingly, those that joined in the prayers of the faithful, never failed to partake of the blessed sacrament. What opinion they had of any who turned his back upon it we may learn from that ancient canon: 'If any believer join in the prayers of the faithful and go away without receiving the Lord's Supper, let him be excommunicated, as bringing confusion into the Church of God.'"⁴

The second reason is the benefits of communing. These are two: "forgiveness of our past sins. . . . What surer way have we of procuring pardon from him [that is, God] than the 'showing forth the Lord's

death' and beseeching Him, for the sake of His Son's sufferings, to blot out all our sins? . . . The grace of God given confirms to us the pardon of our sins."⁵

Pardon meets a man's sinful past. From then on, communion's benefits are: "present strengthening and refreshing of our souls . . . ; and it "enables us to leave them"—that is, our sins.

Tarry a moment to mark two points of permanent importance. The one is his very clear, certain connection of pardon with the sufferings and death of Christ. This is far different and much more New Testament than what he believed in June, 1725, about pardon of sins. The other is his taking pardon as enabling the grace of God to make certain inner changes for the future.

These being the reasons for communing, "we must neglect no occasion, which the good providence of God affords us, for this purpose." Therefore, "this is the true rule: so often are we to receive as God gives us opportunity. . . . Our power is the one rule of our duty."⁶

Preparation for communing is not "absolutely necessary" but is "highly expedient." It is done best "by self-examination and prayers." In the absence of opportunity for this, "we should see that we have the habitual preparation, which is absolutely necessary; and can never be dispensed with on any account, or any occasion whatever." Habitual preparation is: "first, a full purpose of heart to keep all the commandments of God; and, secondly, a sincere desire to receive all his promises."

His second section answers the "common objections against constantly receiving the Lord's Supper." This indicates one major criticism of Wesley's ways. Since it is by far the longest part of the sermon, it is evidently a point at which he was struck hard. It is somewhat repetitious. Also, in its form it is a sermon, having an introductory paragraph and two sections.

The opening paragraph differentiates sharply between "frequent" and "constant" communing. The phrase "frequent communion" he calls absurd to the last degree." Inasmuch as this frequency of communion was John's earlier practice, his present emphasis is a ruthless judgment upon his past. From frequent to constant communing, he came by this reasoning: "If we are not obliged to communicate constantly, by what argument can it be proved that we are obliged to communicate frequently?"

The body of this section is consumed by his proofs of the duty of constant communing. Such proofs are found by viewing the Lord's Supper: "1. As a command of God: or 2. As a mercy to man."

The first is so amplified. God is our creator, mediator and governor. He "declares to us that all who obey His commands, shall be eternally happy; all who do not shall be eternally miserable. Now, one of these commands is, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' I ask, then, when you have an opportunity before you, why do not you obey the command of God?"

Against this, he found some objecting, "God does not command me to do this *as often as I can*," for those words were not in "this particular place," the text. Nor are they but are found in First Corinthians 11:25. Wesley counters: "Are we not to obey every command of God, as often as we can? . . . Our power is the one rule of our duty. . . . With respect either to this or any other command, he that, when he may obey it if he will, does not, will have no place in the kingdom of heaven." Conversely, "Were we to allow that we are not obliged to obey every commandment of God as often as we can, we have no argument left to prove that any man is bound to obey any commandment at any time."

Consideration of communion as an expression of God's mercy to man, John Wesley understood as follows. His basic theses are: God's "mercy is over all his works, Psalms 145:9, and particularly over the children of men." He knows but "one way for man to be happy like Himself; namely, by being like Him in holiness." He knows also man "could do nothing towards this of himself." Therefore, He has given man certain means of attaining His help. One of these is the Lord's Supper. This work of God is a mercy to man. "I ask then," he continues, "why do you not accept of His mercy as often as ever you can? God now offers you His blessings: why do you refuse it?"

He concludes: "Considering this as a command of God, he that does not communicate as often as he can, has no piety; considering it as a mercy, he that does not communicate as often as he can, has no wisdom."

The objections to constant communing, as John Wesley doubtless often heard them were these:

1. Unworthiness to commune; and for such people to do so would bring them damnation.⁷ He exclaims, "What! unworthy to obey God's command? . . . I will tell you for what you shall fear damnation: for not eating and drinking at all."

One form of this unworthiness is a relapse into sin. Wesley here is listing his own experience in university years. He found this objection stated thus: "A man may turn his back upon the altar" as a self-imposed

penance. "What advice is this?" he inquires. "Commit a new act of disobedience, and God will more easily forgive the past!"

Others excuse themselves as unworthy by asserting, "They cannot pretend to lead so holy a life, as constantly communicating would oblige them to do." Such folk appear to have included those who communed occasionally, as his rebuttal discloses: "Then it is plain you ought never to receive it at all. . . . If you cannot live up to the profession they make who communicate once a week, neither can you come up to the profession you make, who communicate once a year." John explains that the only profession is to keep diligently God's commandments, of which one is communion. To claim one cannot do this is to renounce the baptismal covenant, to renounce Christianity.

2. Some object that press of business precludes necessary preparation. "Absolutely necessary" preparation is: repentance for past sin, faith in Christ our Saviour, amendment of life and being in charity with all men.⁸ "If you resolve and design to follow Christ, you are fit to approach the Lord's table. If you do not design this, you are only fit for the table and company of devils." Resolve and design are two of his own modes of quest—resolution and intention. Finally, above every preparation or no preparation at all, he exalts obedience to God's command. "He commands you to come, and prepare yourself by prayer, if you have time; if you have not, come. Make not reverence to God's command a pretence for breaking it. . . . Examining yourself, and using private prayer, especially before the Lord's Supper, is good: but, behold, 'To obey is better than' self-examination; and to hearken, than the prayer of an angel."

3. Constant communion lessens reverence for it. "Suppose it did," John asks, "has God ever told you, that when the obeying his command abates your reverence to it, then you may disobey it?" There is a natural reverence, "owing purely to the newness of a thing. There is also a religious reverence. This kind of reverence constant communing " will not lessen but rather confirm and increase it."

4. Then, some did not find constant communion to bring the expected benefits. Wesley insists upon obedience to divine command, benefits or none. He says there are insensible benefits. At the least, barren communing could be the person's fault: improper preparation, nonobedience, nonreception of all the promises, no trust in God.

5. A final objection is, "The church enjoins it only three times a year." Wesley's argument is, "What if the church had not enjoined it

at all; is it not enough that God enjoins it? We obey the church only for God's sake. And shall we not obey God himself? Moreover, the minimum of thrice communing in a year was set as the least requirement for continuance in her membership. The church's provision for communing every Sunday and holiday witnesses she required this constancy."

Thus, John Wesley taught his own students about the Lord's Supper; and, through the years, taught his Methodist people.⁹ For the present, it is his answer to his critics.

While the sermon reveals John Wesley's mind about the Lord's Supper, the letter discloses his heart's relation to it.

Previous to February 21st¹⁰ of this year, he had written his mother and had given her the views of one of his friends upon the manner in which Christ is really present in the communion. Upon the above date, she wrote him her understanding of it. "Surely the divine presence of our Lord, thus applying the virtue and merits of the great atonement to each true believer, makes the consecrated bread more than a sign of Christ's body; since, by His so doing, we receive not only the sign but with it the thing signified, all the benefits of His incarnation and passion; but still, however this institution may seem to others, to me it is full of mystery." The friend thought likewise apparently.

Seven days later, John's letter recorded his "assent" to her thought upon the basis of "one consideration." It was this: "We cannot allow Christ's human nature to be present in it, without allowing either con- or trans-substantiation.¹¹ But that His divinity is so united to us then, as He never is but to worthy receivers, I firmly believe, though the manner of that union is utterly a mystery to me."

John and Susannah, then, agree the manner of Christ's presence at communion is a mystery. Also they agree that in His supper Christ meets the human participants in an extraordinary "effect" known to none but worthy receivers—those of a prepared mind. To John Wesley, the content of this effect is an unusual uniting of Christ's "divinity" and worthy receivers.

Susannah Wesley accepted Christ as really present in communion but stressed His operations therein as "applying the virtue and merits of the great atonement to each true believer." This makes the bread more than a "sign." It expands the sign into either the means by which, or along with which (so her words, "with it," are to be taken), the "thing signified"—that is, "all the benefits of Christ's incarnation and passion."

She appears to put the whole Gospel, except post-cross meanings, in the Lord's Supper. Later, John Wesley will do substantially, but more adequately, the same: "I showed at large that the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to man either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities."¹² Of course, Susannah Wesley could not know now that she was stating the circumstances of her own justification while at communion:¹³ but that she did experience.

However, upon reading her understanding of the ministration of the communion, the result was: "Mr. Morgan and my brother were affected, as they ought, by the observations you made on that glorious subject: but though my understanding approved what was excellent, yet my heart did not feel it."

The 1732 status of John Wesley's quest requires one to dwell awhile with the above words.

First, notice that two members of the Holy Club were moved by Susannah Wesley's brief exposition of the results of communing. Exactly how they were moved is not specified; but, since John understood but did not respond as did the other two, it is likely that they experienced something more than intellectual apprehension and approval. Theirs was a deeper witness. John regarded it as something which ought to be known.

He himself now is convinced any experience of the "applying the virtue and merits of the great atonement to each true believer" must be evidenced somehow in the soul. Here he is more specific than he was in June, 1725, when he objected to Jeremy Taylor's according vast effects to communing but denying any personal and satisfying witness of them. There, he has these pertinent phrases: "perceive whether we have them or no . . . be sensible of it . . . I imagined . . . certainty of our being in a state of salvation." Here, the final test is a feeling in the soul—an inner something which brings approval and also the conviction of its being the adequate and final approving medium.

Everything he has done, been, or longed to be till now has not given him that feeling. Through seven years, the communion sacrament has been a grand area of quest. Now he has a satisfactory understanding of it. By it two others he saw moved. He was unmoved. He asks, "Why was this?" His answer lays bare his soul at this time in his quest.

Immediate and recent failure to be moved, as were his two companions, was due to these conditions: his heart was "pre-engaged by those affections with which wisdom will not dwell"; and "the animal

mind cannot relish those truths which are spiritually discerned." As far as this goes, it is well; but why his affections were inimical to wisdom, and why the animal was ascendant, he inquires not.

Next, he lists the helps he has. "Yet I have those writings the Good Spirit gave to that end! I have many of those which He hath since assisted His servants to give us; I have retirement to apply these to my own soul daily; I have means both of public and private prayer; and, above all, of partaking in that sacrament once a week. What shall I do to make all these blessings effectual, to gain from them the mind which was also in Christ Jesus?" His question contains the answer he sought. It lies in his words: "I do . . . to make effectual . . . to gain from." Analyze this a little. He is sure what he wants is contained in these means; sure he can gain from them what he ought to have; sure he has power to "make" them effective in his life. The fault in it all is obvious: the man, John Wesley seeker, of himself can do all needed to be done. Herein is his grand error through most of his quest. Seven years of unsuccessful search have not compelled him to suspect that his form of seeking is erroneous.

His letter continues and reports his seeking counsel upon what he shall do to bring to fruition the means he has. It is likely that before he asked his mother's help, which he now does, he had sought the assistance of unnamed others. To them, he addressed this question, "Shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning, but what immediately tends to practice?" Scholarly ways had had a strong appeal for him: "I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy, but it is past." Through this, one sees him recalling the dominant quandary of 1725, whether or not he will devote his life to university or to church, to religion or to learning. This last was the contender then for first place, he now admits. His personal ambition was to distinguish himself in them. There is about this reminiscence a tinge at least of nostalgia, forced from him by the present fact of six years of unrequited quest in the lifework accepted seven years ago. Did his recollection of that crisis beget again a struggle with the same forces? If so, he overcomes.

"But it is past." A Peter-like wish to remain on the mount is dismissed again. Academic studies as a major lifework have spoken again. So did another voice. "Jesus came and touched them, and said, arise, and be not afraid . . . and they saw no man, save Jesus only . . . and they came down from the mountain."¹⁴ The testing has been met again and again victoriously: "It is past," is now his paean. Purified by the

struggle of the recent years, and especially by the direct criticisms of the more recent nine months, rededication to his quest is complete but altered: "There is a more excellent way: and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one without throwing up all thoughts of the other—why, fare it well! Yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue."

These words, "more excellent way" and "yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue," record and describe a deep, radical change in John Wesley's quest. His word, "It is past," refers to the time from this present backward. His longer statement looks forward to the future. Cryptic in its form, it at first strikes one as unrelated to the remainder of the paragraph. Is it unrelated? The answer lies in his reference to breaking off learning, a more excellent way, equality of all in knowledge, and, if there be an equality in virtue. The nub of the matter is the difference between the way of learning and that "more excellent way." Study this a little.

It is certain that, for most of his life until now, he was dominated by the heavy intellectual side of his personality. This was indigenous in the Wesley family. It was not total, however; for several of the children had poetic powers of a high grade. In John's case, that dominance was not questioned until 1725, when choice of his lifework demanded a decision. Alternatives were only two: the scholar or the minister, academics or religion. He chose the latter. Though serious religious practice, in the personal sense, had become part of his life before 1725, it was minor to the academic.

Herein, he was not culpable. All through his ministry, his father continued scholarly ways. His brother Samuel, an ordained clergyman, spent nearly all his life as a teacher. John, therefore, might have expected naturally to become a "teaching priest."¹⁵ Meanwhile, he was unaware of the requirements his serious seeking of a religious "something" would make. By early 1732, he failed to find that "something" by intellectual means and formal religious practice. He has come also to estimate what he is seeking as more important and valuable than scholarly attainments, valuable enough to make him willing to sacrifice one to obtain the other.

Thus, negatively, he now is convinced that languages, philosophy, learning are not the way by which he will find what he seeks. Positively, he has come to see "there is a more excellent way." What to him was that excellent way? Obviously, it was not learning. To him that has been an attempt to seize the kingdom of heaven by intellectual violence. What

this better way is, is to be known from the first clause and the last sentence of the above quotation.

Note the sentence, first: "Yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue." Its language is quite un-Wesleyan, especially the word "virtue": its meaning unrelated to the matter in hand. Wesley himself gives no explanation of it, but the implication is that it is related to the mode of prosecuting his quest after his subjection of learning to religion; and related also to the "more excellent way." This phrase is from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 31, where it introduces his grand chapter on love. Moreover, what he has in mind is an equality in virtue which produces an equality in knowledge.

Such a combination of terms is found in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, in his discussion of the "love of God,"¹⁶ where he writes: "Love is the greatest thing that God can give us: for Himself is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to God; for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the bond of perfection.¹⁷ . . . It does the work of all other graces, without any instrument but its own immediate virtue. . . . The love of God makes a man chaste without the laborious arts of fasting and exterior disciplines . . . and is active enough to choose it without any intermedial appetites, and reaches at glory through the very heart of grace, without any other arms but those of love.

"It is a grace, that loves God for himself; and our neighbors for God.

"When we have tasted the goodness of God, we love the spring for its own excellency, passing from passion to reason, from thanking to adoring, from sense to spirit, from considering ourselves to an union with God; and this is the image and little representation of heaven; it is beatitude in picture, or rather the infancy and beginnings of glory.

"There can but two things create love, perfection and usefulness.

"Our virtues have such proper objects (that is, such as are 'found nowhere but in God'), that it is but reasonable they should all turn into love: for certain it is, that this love will turn into all virtue."

Several items herein call for comment which would be profitable. It is necessary to note the broad themes here—love of God, perfection, virtue: and to mark Taylor's assertion that love of God obviates "exterior disciplines" in the attainment of perfection.

Wanting direct statement of John Wesley's that, when he wrote the sentence under consideration, he had these words of Taylor's in mind, it is clear enough he easily could have had these ideas in mind.

Now, note the phrase, "a more excellent way."

It is located readily as from the closing statement of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12: "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." The Greek, in English letters, is *hyperbolon hodon*. *Hodon* means a road, a way. Omitting the case ending, the other term has been transliterated, not translated, into the English language. Literally, it means something "thrown beyond" something else. Metaphorically, it accords to a given thing a superiority. Wesley does specify what the inferior something is—learning. Paul, too, specifies what his inferior something was: the nine gifts of chapter 12, verses 8–10, reduced to seven in verse 28. Paul's lists do not confine their range to learning, but it is prominent therein: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, prophecy, discerning of spirits, interpretation of tongues—in verses 8–10. In verse 28, he rates them in degrees of importance, putting teachers (learning implied) third.

Having acknowledged the propriety of these in the Church; and having sought to dispel their evident dividing and embittering effects by asserting all were the gifts of the "same spirit,"¹⁸ he closes that chapter by declaring: over all these, there is "a more excellent way," a way better, beyond, superior to each gift and to all gifts. That something, the theme of chapter 13, is love. Paul exalts love over all other talents or activities, including learning. It is of real significance to note that grand description of Christian love, chapter 13, was written to the Corinthians; that his succinct definition of love's self-giving, II Corinthians 12:15, was written to them also; and that his rhapsody upon the keeping-sufficiency of Christ's love for us, Romans 8:35–39, was written at Corinth.

Equally important is it to note that Paul's and the New Testament's outstanding presentation of the limits of human knowledge, the transcendence over it of divine knowledge and the way by which divine knowledge is received, is made by Paul in I Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 18–31, and in all of chapter two.

There is weight also in the historic fact that Paul came to Corinth directly from Athens. Athens was the centuries-old acme of learning. A man of Paul's intellectual character would be conscious deeply of the power of such a past. Festus admitted Paul was one of "much learning."¹⁹ It is probable, therefore, he came to Athens with a spirit of veneration and of expectancy, looking to find something of idyllic culture and of a patient, reasonable and intelligent hearing of his message. Instead, he found the city swamped with idols (to him); and the populace, native and foreign, hunting only the "newer"²⁰—that is, having

no mind, sound and solid, but only a lust, like that of the teachers of II Timothy 4:3, for what tickled the ears. Therefore, while a few believed, most appear to have mocked.

Smitten heavily by defeat, Paul, between preaching at Athens and coming to Corinth, made a wide, deep and a radical change in his preaching and in his estimate of the place and power of human knowledge.

The bearing of this upon John Wesley consists of the parallels between Paul and himself: Paul was a learned man; at a center of learning, he suffered defeat and disillusionment concerning human knowledge; he gave proper place to human wisdom; lifted up above it revelation as the mode by which things of the spirit are known; and subordinated all to love—the “more excellent way.” In a scantier degree, John Wesley did the same. Who shall say it was not of the Spirit that he was given to recognize his lesser parallel to Paul and to accept the final fruitage of the larger experience? Through the years, he will be expounding chapter 13 of Paul’s very often. Paul’s text, I Corinthians 1:30, will be preached from almost equally often and he will call it his “favorite sermon.”

Thus, from Jeremy Taylor and Paul, there come those great themes—knowledge, perfection and love. The first, John Wesley will accord constantly its place in his personal life and in that of his people. The others, he will keep always together: Christian perfection, a cardinal objective in himself and in his teaching, will be given always, insistently and only this content—love of God above all else and, then, love of one’s neighbor.

One is now able to see the reason why John used the word “equal.” The gifts of Corinthians are different, and by very virtue of this disparity beget a degree of separation among those having them. Love, however, is ever and always the great unifying agent. How much of this Wesley had grasped in February, 1732, is not confessed. His notes on the New Testament, finished on September 23, 1755, has it thus in his comment on verse 31 of chapter 12 in referring to gifts and love: “But there is a far more excellent gift than all these; and one which all may, yea, must attain or perish.” Every one is limited to his gift, but all can have love of God and of neighbor.

Enough has been seen now to enable us to estimate Wesley’s shift of major emphasis from learning to love, the “more excellent way,” as an alteration of vast import in his quest. This narrows the scholar but widens the popular diffusion of scholarly findings. To his people and

to myriads of others, John Wesley will be an outstanding mediator of many kinds of knowledge. Now, too, the man is narrowed but the seeker is widened. Now, also, the means of seeking are narrowed, but the prospect of success is wider than ever.

From these Gospel truths, John Wesley will never depart; but how far he now realized their extent is not to be estimated. Certainly, he discerned them. In the next paragraph of this letter of February 28th, he reverts again to the means by which he can "make all these blessings effectual, to gain from them the mind which was also in Christ Jesus."

Previous to this letter, and in a similar reference to means, his mother had told him she had "renounced the world," the implication being that her son by doing the same would find what he sought. John agrees. "You say you 'have renounced the world,' and what have I been doing all this time? What have I done ever since I was born? Why, I have been plunging myself into it more and more. It is enough. 'Awake, thou that sleepest.' Is there not 'one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of our calling'? One way of attaining that hope?" These last two sentences seem to be an epitome of what she had written him.

He rejoins: "Then I am to renounce the world, as well as you. That is the very thing I want to do; to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and the shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this? To own the necessity of it is not to be humble."

Clear location of himself in his quest is here. His mother's counsel of renunciation of this world is not pertinent, for he is now and for some time has been eager to do it. He understands such renunciation to be, negatively, detaching his love from this world, and, positively, fixing his affection upon a better world. Judging from his later life, he meant a better world here and also the perfect world of the hereafter. His word "fix" discloses his conviction that whatever he wants is to be steady in its nature.

How to do this, he knows not. Humility suggests itself as both the surest and the shortest way. Humility is a constant factor in his quest. In June, 1725, it appeared strongly and has continued to do so since. It does so here. He knows it is inseparable from his quest, and is now a large step towards the world-renunciation he wants to make. But he admits he does not know how to become humble. His last sentence in the quote tells us he has the idea of humility; has a sense of the neces-

sity of it; but insists that neither or both of these is actual, vital humility. It appears he wanted to know humility as an inner quality or spirit and an outer operating power, working in him a renunciation of this world and a fixed affection for a better one.

Thus, it seems he has outgrown her counsel. Still, he has faith in her prayers. "In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed. Who knows but in this too you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart as it was then for forming my judgment."

Death again contributes urgency, intensity to his fear of not consummating his quest. Two influences heightened now this dread. The one was the grave illness of that vigorous laborer in the Holy Club William Morgan. "A year ago Mr. Morgan was exceedingly well pleased with the thought of dying shortly," John wrote his mother. "He will not now bear to have it named, though he can neither sleep, read, stand, nor sit. . . . His discharge cannot be far off.' He died the ensuing August.

The other was Susannah Wesley herself. She had written him she had "but little time to stay in the world." She would pass on July 30, 1742.

These doubtless added to the failure of his quest (as he thought) an acute poignancy. "When I observe how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes, I think one can never be too much afraid of dying before one has learned to live. For were I sure that 'the silver cord' should not be violently 'loosed' . . . till it was quite worn away by its own notion, yet what a time would this give for such a work? A moment to transact the business of eternity! What are forty years in comparison of this?"²¹

From these great thoughts and searchings of heart, whose concerns pertain more particularly to John Wesley himself, one must turn to concerns more public. These converge primarily upon the Holy Club. Criticism came early this year.

Dublin, Ireland, was the place from which it came first. The critic was Richard Morgan, Sr., father of William, member of the Club. His aversion appears indirectly through his letter of March 15th²² to this son.

The father wrote: "You can't conceive what a noise that ridiculous

society which you are engaged in has made here. Besides the particulars of the great follies of it at Oxford, which to my great concern I have often heard repeated, it gave me a sensible trouble to hear that you were noted for your going into the villages about Holt, entering into poor people's houses, calling their children together, teaching them their prayers and catechism, and giving them a shilling at your departure."

Evidently, the Club and its works had become known far away from the Oxford campus. Morgan Senior did not object to his son's being religiously serviceable and devout. He did object to the outlay of money. While he informed his son he would be "no longer tied to any fixed allowance," he yet warned him it was to be used only for his health and education. As to charitable giving: "You must leave me to judge for myself what portion of my substance it is fit for me to dispose of to charitable uses, of which I will be the distributor myself. You have no substance of your own; and it is but common justice that what I put into your hands should be disposed of according to my directions." Father loosens the purse strings but claims right to allocate the use-areas of its contents.

Upon the Club's religious observances, advising with a "wise, pious, and learned clergyman," he was told the "worst of consequences follow from such blind zeal," which was a "thorough mistake of true piety and religion." This clergyman said also the Club could "walk uprightly and safely without endeavouring to outdo all the good bishops, clergy, and other pious and good men of the present and past ages." The father comments, "God Almighty give you grace and sense to understand aright."

Mr. Morgan's concern arose from his son's ill health, which became apparent in June last year.²³ June 5th of this year, he will go home to Dublin, where, on August 26th, he will die. The rebound of this upon the Club will be noted below.

April saw the next critic come. He will be the Wesley's older brother, Samuel, Jr. He "spent a few days" at Oxford, "no doubt with a view chiefly to satisfy himself on the spot of the truth or falsehood of the various accounts that were given him of his two brothers."²⁴ Saying it was a "hasty visit,"²⁵ Adam Clarke reports: Samuel "wrote a poetic epistle to his brother Charles . . . encouraging them to go on, and endeavoring to guard them against such excess of labor as might be injurious to health and life." Pertinent lines of this letter in poetry are these,

Of their design, he inquires:

Say, does your Christian purpose still proceed,
T'assist in every shape the wretches' need?
To free the prisoner from his anxious goal,
When friends forsake him, and relations fail?
Or yet with nobler charity conspire
To snatch the guilty from eternal fire?

The Holy Club is next questioned:

Has your small squadron firm in trial stood,
Without preciseness, singularly good?
Safe march they on, 'twixt dangerous extremes
Of mad profaneness, and enthusiasts' dreams?
Constant in prayer, while God approves their pains,
His Spirit cheers them, and His blood sustains!
Unmoved by pride or anger, can they bear
The foolish laughter, or the envious flier?
No wonder wicked men blaspheme their care.
The devil always dreads offensive war.

He is concerned that religion does not spoil their scholarship:

But hold! perhaps this day religious toil,
May damp the genius and the scholar spoil!

Apparently, Samuel was told by John of the decision he had made the past February to put religion over learning.

Samuel was solicitous, too, about John's health:

Does John beyond his strength presume to go,
To his frail carcass literally a foe?
Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
And shorten time to insure eternity?

The elder brother's investigation, which included talks with his brothers and also his "friends so numerous," furnished him no ground for serious or basic disagreement. On the contrary, he approved what

they were doing and encouraged them to adhere firmly to their "Christian purpose," to be "firm in trial," to maintain pursuit of learning, and to guard their health. They have now a doughty champion.

The year 1732 saw an increase in Holy Club members. The previous year, of the original five, William Morgan was incapacitated by illness; Robert Kirkham left Oxford to become curate to an uncle; another was a casualty of the rising criticism; and John and Charles were quite alone. In the spring of this year, John Clayton, Mr. Broughton and half a dozen students of Clayton and the Wesleys added themselves to the Club.²⁶ Benjamin Ingham joined and John Gambold,²⁷ struck by criticism of the Wesleys.

Clayton was one of the most important of the Holy Club's members. Son of a bookseller in Manchester, he was six years older than John Wesley. Having entered Brasenose College in 1726, he was now a tutor.²⁸ He was an unbending High Churchman. April 20th, while walking in some Oxford street, they met. John invited him to his room and they became friends. Soon, John Wesley explained to him the designs of the Holy Club, and he immediately joined it."²⁹ It was a significant addition, as is shown in the next chapter.

Until this time, John Wesley had been advancing in his wider views of what composed the Church. "In my youth," he wrote, "I was not only a member of the Church of England, but a bigot to it, believing none but the members of it to be in a state of salvation. I began to abate of this violence in 1729." By the end of 1738, he has gotten over this narrowness and was able to write to James Hutton, "I believe you don't think I am (whatever I was) bigoted either to the Ancient Church or the Church of England."³⁰

Now, however, under the influence of John Clayton, the Holy Club, John Wesley included, came to a high pitch of formal religious practices. By nature and training, Wesley was orderly. Hitherto, he "went to school to the Rubric,"³¹ as a "learner in quest of a teacher."³² Clayton, "a man of wide reading and a powerful preacher . . . led the Wesleys to observe the fasts of the Church, the practice of many ritualistic customs, the observance of the stations, and the study of the ancient liturgies."³³

In July, sometime, John Wesley paid a visit to William Law, whose book, *Serious Call*, had had a vast influence on him. There is no detailed

record of what happened, except that Law, beginning to turn mystic, advised John to read mystic books.³⁴ John did so. The potent and nearly disastrous effects of this will be seen four years hence.

August 3rd, John became at London a member of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.³⁵ This is the first organization he joined. It is not an activity in the academic but in the social and service area. At the present, it is a widening of his possibilities. It will widen to its uttermost limits his geographic area of ministry, since it will have its influence in sending him to America.

Sometime between August 3 and September 23, the Wesley family held a reunion at Epworth.³⁶ The reason for it was the increasing illness of the father. It was the last time the three living Wesley sons were to be together at home. The ill health of Samuel, Sr., stimulated his desire that John succeed him. The son's sturdy refusal, to put it mildly, will be noted in its place.

The affair of the Holy Club becomes uppermost at the end of 1732. It does so through two defenders of it against criticism: John Wesley and William Law. The former will make his longest and last major defense of it; the latter, his one and only defense.

John Wesley's defense arose from the charges made upon him after the death of William Morgan on August 26th last. The charge was that the "rigorous fasting" young Morgan had imposed upon himself upon the advice of the Wesleys had "killed" him. The serious nature of the charge is that it was a charge of murder, or of manslaughter. How widely and earnestly the charge was held is not known, except by the fact that Wesley replied to it in a long letter of twenty paragraphs, two of which require a page and a half of print. John's answer to the charge has these points: a refutation of the specific charge; a review of the rise of the Club; and a statement of its practices. The second of these has been presented above. Hence, the two others need attention now.

Wesley's answer to the specific charge is brief and adequate. His letter was written on October 18, and was sent to William Morgan's father, Richard, Sr. Estimating the case as "of a very extraordinary nature"; declaring he himself sat lightly to men's judgment of him and his ways; and giving his reason for replying as a desire to keep his work from hindrance, he explodes the charge in two clauses: "Your son left off fasting about a year and a half since; and it is not yet half a year since I began to practice it." Calculating from the letter's date,

John himself began fasting less than six month's earlier, which would be later than May of this year. Young Morgan, however, had quit fasting "about a year and a half ago," which would be around May-June of 1730. How, then, Wesley argues, could he have been responsible for another's fasting, when he had not begun to fast until a year after young Morgan quit it? Forthwith, John dismisses the charge.

His review of the Club's genesis and progress contains the most complete listing of its ways, and the only such list in all the Wesley literature. Since it is fundamental both to the Club's story, to the later modes of Methodism, and is John's most succinct reply to his critics, it should be recorded here:

"But the outcry daily increasing, that we might show what ground there was for it, we proposed to our friends, or opponents, as we had opportunity, these or the like questions":

I. Whether it does not concern all men of all conditions to imitate Him, as much as they can, "Who went about doing good"?

Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, "While we have time, let us do good to all men"?

Whether we shall not be more happy hereafter, the more good we do now?

Whether we can be happy at all hereafter, unless we have, according to our power, "fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited those that are sick and in prison"; and made all these actions subservient to an higher purpose, even the saving of souls from death?

Whether it be not our bounden duty always to remember that He did more for us than we can do for Him, who assures us, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"?

II. Whether, upon these considerations, we may not try to do good to our acquaintance? Particularly, whether we may not try to convince them of the necessity of being Christians?

Whether of the consequent necessity of being scholars?

Whether of the necessity of method and industry, in order to either learning or virtue?

Whether we may try to persuade them to confirm and increase their industry, by communicating as often as they can?

Whether we may not mention to them the authors whom we conceive to have wrote best on those subjects?

Whether we may not assist them, as we are able, from time to time, to form resolutions upon what they read in those authors, and to execute them with steadiness and perseverance?

III. Whether, upon the considerations above-mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are hungry, naked, or sick? In particular, whether, if we know any necessitous family, we may not give them a little food, clothes, or physic, as they want?

Whether we may not give them, if they can read, a Bible, Common Prayer Book, or *Whole Duty of Man*?

Whether we may not now and then inquire how they have used them; explain what they don't understand, and enforce what they do?

Whether we may not enforce upon them especially the necessity of private prayer and of frequenting the church and sacrament?

Whether we may not contribute what little we are able toward having their children clothed and taught to read?

Whether we may not take care that they be taught their catechism and short prayers for morning and evening?

IV. Lastly: Whether, upon the considerations above-mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are in prison? In particular, whether we may not release such well-disposed persons as remain in prison for small sums?

Whether we may not lend smaller sums to those that are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with?

Whether we may not give to them who appear to want it most a little money, or clothes, or physic?

Whether we may not supply as many as are serious enough to read them with a Bible and *Whole Duty of Man*?

Whether we may not, as we have opportunity, explain and enforce these upon them, especially with respect to public and private prayer and the blessed sacrament?

"I do not remember that we met with any person who answered any of these questions in the negative, or who even doubted whether it were not lawful to apply to this use that time and money which we should else have spent in other diversions."

The other defender of the Holy Club was William Law. Some unnamed person wrote a letter criticizing Wesley and his friends. In mid-August,⁸⁷ that letter was published in a periodical named *Fogg's Journal*. As such, it was the first published attack upon Methodism. It

is quite accurate in listing Holy Club practices, but equally ignorant and biased in its presentation of them.³⁸

A friend of William Law's sent him a copy of *Fogg's Journal* containing this letter, and in a letter of his own asked Law for information about the Methodists. To answer, Law went to Oxford to learn the facts for himself. The university men he questioned were unfriendly to the Methodists. Then he interviewed the Methodists themselves. His conclusions, he later published. Talk had it that their ways were due to their "perversely construing and misinterpreting" the Scriptures and the "orders and injunctions of the Church." This allegation was untrue, Law found. Talk had it, also, that they considered their practices were not essentials in religion but were the fruits of a "gloomy and Pharisaical spirit." This, too, Law found to be untrue, but that they did some things in order to "save time and money for improving the glorious ends" they proposed. Law did not accord the Oxford Methodists any hearty approval, but he did find some common reports about them utterly untrue.³⁹

Thus, there came in 1732 the first published criticism of the Oxford Methodists and its first published defense.

Here then is John Wesley, seeker, midway in his quest.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JANUARY 1, 1733, found John Wesley preaching in the pulpit of St. Mary's, Oxford. His sermon's subject was: "The Circumcision of the Heart: its text, Romans 2:29, "Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."¹ It was published, the first of his writings to be published by another than himself.²

To this sermon, there is a triple significance. Since his becoming a "man of one Book," his writings, his *Letters* especially, quote the Scriptures very little, from which fact one would be led to conclude the designation was empty. This sermon, however, shows how thoughtfully he was attentive to the Bible. Again, it proves that, amidst all his seemingly fruitless reaching here and there in his quest, he did come to a clarity and a maturity on some phases of the Gospel. This fact he acknowledged thirty-two years later in this evaluation: it "contains all that I now teach concerning salvation from *all sin* and loving God with an *undivided heart*."³ There is one exception to this statement to be noted: that it originally had an omission, which, like his two blank pages in his notes on John 3, he could not supply at the time. This is its third significance. Because the sermon contains so much which Wesley's quest at its mid-time point did find, it must be examined quite fully.

Circumcision of the heart "in general . . . is that habitual disposition of soul which in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies, the being cleansed from sin, 'from all filthiness of flesh and spirit'; and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues, which were also in Christ Jesus; the being so 'renewed in the spirit of our mind,' as to be 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.'"⁴

Circumcision in "particular . . . implies humility, faith, hope, and charity. Humility, a right judgment of ourselves, cleanses our minds from those high conceits of our own perfections, from that undue opinion of our abilities and attainments, which are the corrupted fruit of a corrupted nature. . . . It convinces us that in our best estate, we are of ourselves, all sin and vanity; that confusion, ignorance, and error reign

over our understanding; that unreasonable, earthly, sensual, devilish passions usurp authority over our will; in a word, that there is no whole part of our soul, that all the foundations of our nature are out of course." Humility's judgment convinces us "that we are not sufficient of ourselves to help ourselves; that without the spirit of God, we can do nothing but add sin to sin." Humility's "right judgment of the sinfulness and helplessness of our nature" effects disregard of men's praise. "He who knows himself, neither desires nor values the applause which he knows he deserves not."

Having treated of humility, he then speaks of faith. "The best guide of the blind, the surest light of them that are in darkness, the most perfect instructor of the foolish, is faith." In its nature, faith is first "an unshaken assent to all that God has revealed in the Scripture—and in particular to those important truths": Christ came to save sinners; He bore our sins in his own body; and He is the propitiation for our sins. Faith's operations are guidance, illumination and teaching. Its nature is man's assent to God's revelation in Scripture, especially to three works of Christ. Faith, then, is an intellectual agreement that Scripture is God's revelation. He will come to call this merely a "notional" faith—which is only a belief; not faith in the New Testament sense.

Here, John stopped, as far as his understanding of faith is concerned. He not only "knew not how to go any farther" but he did not know there was any farther to go.

Accurate measurement of this position of John Wesley in his quest can be had by noting the addition to this sermon he made to the paragraph just quoted. Thirteen years later, 1746, he published a volume of forty-four of his sermons. One of these, the thirteenth, is this one on "The Circumcision of the Heart." After his listing the three doctrines, assent to which he took as faith, he now in 1746 put an asterisk, so explained in a footnote: "N.B. The following part of this paragraph is now added to the sermon formerly preached." This addition reads: faith was "not only an unshaken assent . . . but likewise the revelation of Christ in our hearts; a divine evidence or conviction of His love, His free, unmerited love to me a sinner; a sure confidence in His pardoning mercy, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost; a confidence, whereby every true believer is enabled to bear witness, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' that I have an 'advocate with the Father,' and that 'Jesus Christ the righteous' is my Lord, and the 'propitiation for my sins'—I know He hath 'loved me, and given Himself for me'—he hath reconciled me, even me, to God; and I 'have redemption through His blood, even the

forgiveness of sins.' " This 1746 addition to his 1733 sermon is an amplification of his Aldersgate experience, whose fullness discloses the distance between the Wesley of 1738 and the one of 1733.

In 1733, John Wesley could not say of faith any more than it was an "unshaken assent" to certain things.

John's sermon continues: "Such a faith as this cannot fail to show evidently the power of Him that inspires it, by delivering His children from the yoke of sin, and 'purging their consciences from dead works'; by strengthening him so, that they are no longer constrained to obey sin in the desires thereof; but instead of 'yielding their members unto it, as instruments of unrighteousness,' they now 'yield themselves' entirely 'unto God, as those are alive from the dead.' "

Those having this faith as unshaken assent are "born of God." So born, they have hope. "Through hope," these have "strong consolation." Such consolation is: "Even the testimony of their own spirit with the Spirit⁵ which witnesses in their heart that they are the children of God. By this double witness, they know in their hearts they are God's children; know a 'clear and cheerful confidence that their heart is upright towards God'; have assurance they now do by grace what is acceptable to God; possess a 'lively expectation of receiving all good things at God's hands'; and have also 'a joyous prospect of the crown of glory reserved in heaven for them.' "

By such an anchorage, a "Christian is kept steady . . . and preserved from striking upon either of those fatal rocks, presumption and despair." Also, by these they are enabled to endure hardships . . . "able not only to renounce the works of darkness, but every appetite too, and every affection."

Above all this, they have love. "Add love, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart." Love is perfection. "It is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. . . . It is all the commandments in one." The "royal law of heaven and earth is this, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'" This does not forbid one's taking pleasure in aught else save God. "To suppose this, is to suppose the Fountain of Holiness is directly the author of sin; since He has inseparably annexed pleasure to the use of those creatures which are necessary to sustain the life He has given us. . . . The real sense of it is . . . the one perfect Good shall be your one ultimate end. . . . Love the creature, as it leads to the Creator . . . God, the sole end as well as source of your being. . . . Have no end, no ultimate end but God."

"Some reflections" close this sermon.

1. "It is clear from what has been said, that no man has a title to the praise of God, unless his heart is circumcised by humility . . . unless he continually feels in his inmost soul, that without the Spirit of God resting upon him, he can neither think, nor desire, nor speak, nor act any good thing, or well pleasing in his sight."

2. "None shall obtain the honour that cometh from God, unless his heart be circumcised by faith; even a 'faith of the operation of God': unless, refusing to be any longer led by his senses, appetites, or passions, or even that blind leader of the blind, so idolized by the world, natural reason, he lives and walks by faith. . . ." (Eleven months ago, he had renounced scholarship; and now he has come not to deny reason its proper area of activity, nor its proper work with religious things, but to oust reason from any ability to procure what can be procured only and alone by a faith not generated by man but given by God.)

3. Such faith is the only true foundation of religion. "Grounding religion on the eternal *fitness* of things, on the intrinsic *excellence* of virtue, and the *beauty* of actions flowing from it; on the *reasons* . . . of good and evil, and the *relations* of beings to each other"—these are to be judged in relation to Scripture, whether they be of God or not.

4. His compact answer is: "Our Gospel, as it knows no other foundation of good works than faith, or of faith than Christ, so it clearly informs us, we are not His disciples, while we either deny Him to be the author, or His Spirit to be the inspirer and perfector both of our faith and works. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' He alone can quicken those who are dead unto God, can breathe into them the breath of Christian life, and so prevent, accompany, and follow them with His grace, as to bring their good desires to good effect. And 'as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' This is God's short and plain account of true religion and virtue; and 'other foundation can no man lay.'"

5. "None is truly 'led by the Spirit' . . . unless he see the prize and the crown before him, and 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' So greatly have they erred who have taught that, in serving God, we ought not to have a view to our own happiness! Nay, but we are often and expressly taught of God, to have 'respect unto the recompense of reward'; to balance the toil with the 'joy set before us,' these 'light afflictions' with that 'exceeding weight of glory.' Yea, we are 'aliens to the covenant of promise,' we are 'without God in the world,' until God 'of His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope of the

inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' "

Finally, to those who object that these things "are too severe: and no man ever did, or shall, live up to them!" Wesley replies, "What is this but to reproach God, as if He were a hard master, requiring of His servants more than He enables them to perform? As if he mocked the helpless work of His hands by binding them to impossibilities . . .?" One must agonize 'to enter in at the strait gate,' which constitutes self-denial. "All virtues would be insecure, and even salvation in danger, without a constant and continued course of self-denial!" There is no effective "fighting the fight of faith" without love. "Love, cutting off both the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—engaging the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, in the ardent pursuit of that one object—is so essential to a child of God, that, without it, whosoever liveth is counted dead before him. . . . Here then is the sum of the perfect law, this is the true circumcision of the heart. Let the spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections. . . . Other sacrifices from us He would not; but the living sacrifice of the heart He hath chosen. Let it be continually offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love."⁶

Estimate this sermon a little.

"Our knowledge of human labor," John Ruskin said, "if intimate enough, will, I think, mass it for the most part into two kinds—mining and moulding; the labour that seeks for things, and the labour that shapes them. Of these the last should be always orderly, for we ought to have some conception of the whole of what we have to make, before we try to make any part of it: but the labour of seeking must be often methodless, following the veins of the mine as they branch, or trying for them where they are broken."⁷ Ruskin was referring to art, but his observations apply here.

For seven years, John Wesley's quest has been characterized by mining, seeking the signs of the ore he wants and sinking his prospecting pockets into likely claims. He has been finding nuggets of Gospel gold. Now he molds it into order. This sermon is his first at systematizing what he has found.

What first impresses one is the quantity and purity of the ore he has mined and molded. Flaw can scarcely be found in it. Save for one point, he himself all his later and long life found no fault with it. Its broad résumé of the Gospel was tested by others in his later and long ministry; and stood their testing.

Next, notice must be made of the fact that it came from the Bible.

Particularly, it came from Paul's letters to the Corinthians and the Romans. Especially significant, most of it he found in the latter book: for when he comes to his vital, personal experience of the heart-circumcision he here delineates, the Epistle to the Romans will be the door thereto.

Again, as one reads this sermon and all the while remembers it would be nearly six years before its writer knew incontestably and personally the life he now so fully describes, he wonders why the preacher of the sermon had not yet that of which he wrote. The answer lies in his faulty comprehension of faith.

This sermon is a grand course-marking for the second and the successful half of his quest. It is a Pisgah peak.

Though the time in 1733 of its composition and preaching are not available, in this year there was written a second sermon. Its title is, "On Grieving the Holy Spirit." Its text is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ephesians 4:30.⁸ Between the sermon presented above and this one there is a relation in their treating of the Holy Spirit. The former discourse refers to what the Spirit does in a man: this one, to what a man can do but ought not to do to the Spirit in him. He ought not to grieve the Holy Spirit.

The gist of Wesley's sermon is this:

The Holy Spirit has two grand offices. One: "It is the Holy Spirit which leads us into all truth and into all holiness." Two: "The Holy Spirit is the immediate minister of God's will upon earth, and transacts all the great affairs of the Church of Christ." Moreover, the Holy Spirit does vast things in the soul of a man. "The title 'Holy,' applied to the Spirit of God, does not only denote that He is holy in His own nature, but that He makes us so: that He is the great fountain of holiness⁹ to His Church; the Spirit from whence flows all the grace and virtue, by which the stains of guilt are cleansed, and we are renewed in all holy dispositions, and again bear the image of our Creator." Therefore, "there can be no point of greater importance . . . than to consider with what temper of soul we are to entertain His divine presence."

That proper temper of soul is not to grieve God's Holy Spirit. By grief of the Holy Spirit, "we are to understand, a disposition in God's will, flowing at once from His boundless love to the persons of men, and His infinite abhorrence of their sins." That is: love of the sinner plus abhorrence of his sin adds up to the grief of the Holy Spirit. Here,

John Wesley does not refer to the never-forgiven sinner. "A man may be provoked indeed by the wrongs of his enemy, but he is properly grieved by the offences of his friend. . . . It is the unfaithful professor, who has known his pardoning love, that grieves his Holy Spirit." Such grief arises under three conditions.

First, the Holy Spirit's "immediate presence" in a believer and that person's unfaithfulness. John expands this. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰ Therefore, His presence within our soul is "intimate" and "immediate." Thus sin is "more directly committed under His eye" and is "more offensive" to Him. The Holy Spirit, having regarded "professing Christians as more peculiarly separated to His honour . . . every sin which we now commit, besides its own proper guilt, carries in it a fresh and infinitely high provocation."

Second, "we grieve the Holy Spirit by our sins, because they are so many contempts of the highest expression of His love. . . . For men thus to disappoint the Holy Spirit of love . . . to make Him thus wait that He may be gracious, and pay attendance on us through our whole course of folly and vanity, and to stand by, and be a witness of our stubbornness, with the importunate offers of infinite kindness in His hands, is a practice of such a nature that no gracious mind can bear the thoughts of it."

Third, the final sequence of this is to "provoke the Holy Spirit to withdraw from us." Wesley continues: "The truth of this, almost all who have ever tasted of the good gifts of the Holy Spirit must have experienced. It is to be hoped that we have had, sometime or other, so lively a sense of His holy influence upon us, as that when we have been so unhappy as to offend Him, we could easily perceive the change in our souls, in that darkness, distress, and despondency, which more especially follow the commission of wilful and presumptuous sins. At those seasons the blessed Spirit retired and concealed His presence from us, we were justly left to a sense of our own wretchedness and misery, till we humbled ourselves before the Lord, and, by deep repentance, and active faith, obtained a return of divine mercy and peace."

Especially grieving the Holy Spirit are these sins. Lack of attention to whatever movings the Spirit makes is one. Mostly, the cause of this is: "Men are generally lost in the hurry of life." Proper attitude means "preserving our minds in a cool and serious disposition, in regulating and calming our affections, and calling in and checking the inordinate pursuits of our passions after the vanities and pleasures of this world." Unless this temper is maintained, the downward course is marked by

a fatal lethargy, then a loss of any sense of danger, next an insensibility to divine conviction. The final result of these is the disappointing "all the blessed means of restoration."

Worst of all man's Spirit-grieving acts are "presumptuous" or "wilful" sin. "The wilful sinner is not ignorant or surprised, but knowingly fights against God's express commandment, and the lively, full, and present conviction of his own mind and conscience; so that is the very standard of iniquity. And all other kinds of sins are more or less heinous, as they are nearer or farther off from sins of this dreadful nature."

Wesley ends this sermon by an exposition of the sealing by the Holy Spirit. Sealing has a threefold meaning. First, the Holy Spirit puts His "real stamp upon our souls," by which "we are made the partakers of the divine nature." Such renewal renders one "more capable of [the Spirit's] influences": and then, "by means of a daily intercourse with Him, we are more and more transformed into His likeness, till we are satisfied with it. This likeness to God, this conformity of our will and affections to His will, is, properly speaking, holiness; and to produce this in us, is the proper end and design of all the influence of the Holy Spirit. And until our spirits are, in some measure, thus renewed, we can have no communion with Him."

Second, our reception of the Holy Spirit marks us as "God's property," a "sign that we belong to Christ." This constitutes by Christ's "appointment" the condition and security of that future happiness into which He will admit none but those who have received the Spirit of his Son into their hearts. But in whomsoever He finds this mark and character, when He shall come to judge the world, these will he take to himself, and will not suffer the destroyer to hurt them."¹¹

Third, "the Holy Spirit within us . . . is likewise an earnest" of our "title to eternal happiness." It "gives a man beforehand, a taste of the bliss to which he is going. In this sense, God is said, by the apostle to the Corinthians,¹² to have 'sealed us,' and to have given the earnest of his Spirit into our hearts . . . and that earnest . . . as an actual part of that reward at present, the fulness of which we expect hereafter."¹³

Highly profitable it would be to record the comments which can be made upon both these sermons, were doing so within the scope of this work. Within that scope, it is proper to say that this second 1733 sermon is excellent mining, though the molding is a bit clumsy. However, the digging displays great industry, and the slight flaws in molding are effaced easily, allowing the clear discernment of the figure's lines.

Two visits to Epworth were made by John Wesley this year: one in January, another in May. This latter was of small concern here.

"In January, 1733," Tyerman records, "Wesley set out on horseback for Epworth, to see his father, whose health was failing; and, on his way, had a narrow escape by his horse falling over a bridge, not far from Daventry."¹⁴ Paternal illness was but part of the reason for this visit. The other part was the father's successor as rector at Epworth. First choice was Samuel, Jr., who had refused, preferring his work as schoolmaster.¹⁵ Next, as Tyerman put it, "His parents suggested to him the propriety of using means to obtain the Epworth living."¹⁶ Son John was cool to the proposal. Samuel and Susannah took notice of this response of his; for, writing to his mother on February 15th, John said, "You observed when I was with you that I was very indifferent to having or not having Epworth living. I was indeed unable to determine either way; and that for this reason: I knew if I could stand my ground here and approve myself a faithful minister of our blessed Jesus, by honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, then there was not a place under heaven like this for improvement in every good work. But whether I can stem the torrent which I saw then, but see now much more, rolling down from all sides upon me, that I know not."¹⁷

Rolling down from all sides, the torrent was indeed. Part of it, he found at Epworth. While talking with her one day of his January visit upon his and the Holy Club's ways at Oxford, she had advised him to speak "little upon religious subjects."¹⁸ She buttressed her counsel by declaring of the Holy Club that they all would be of her mind when they came to her age—that is, they would find it best to talk little about things religious.

John answered. "The more I think of the reason you gave me at Epworth for speaking little upon religious subjects, the less it satisfies me." Quoting her reason, given above, he wrote: "But who will assure us that we shall ever be of that age? Or suppose we should, is it not better to be of that mind sooner? Is not right faith of use at thirty as well as at sixty? And are not the actions that flow from a right faith as rewardable now as then? I trust they are. . . ." Death forced from him the first question. Age as requisite to having a "right faith" is dismissed from the reckoning by the second question. It is not merely youthful impetuosity which spoke here (John is now so) but it is the urgency of his own well-known need. His phrase, "right faith," might be the genesis of a quest for what he added to that paragraph in

his sermon on "Circumcision of the Heart." For the present, his mother's observation was a form of opposition to the Holy Club at the point of their youth as engendering ideas and ways which age will show as errors. Criticism from home and, of all people, from his mother, he now meets and fights.

The Club, or it plus some communicants, suffered severe numerical loss this year. Early in June, John, returning from the second Epworth visit, found this loss. On June 13, he wrote the details to his father. There had been twenty-seven "communicants" at St. Mary's, but now there were only five. The loss he attributed partly to his absence from Oxford. "The effects of my last journey, I believe, will make me more cautious of staying any time from Oxford in the future." The larger cause was Wesley's singularity.

"Considering the matter a little more nearly," he saw the costs to him for it were these—"diminution of fortune, loss of friends and of reputation." About the first, he concludes he "could not have born a larger"; and he asks, "Can you do the good God would have you do?" His answer to his own question is, "It is enough. Look no farther." As for friends, such are either triflers or serious. "If triflers, fare them well—a noble escape; if serious, those who are more serious are left. As far as reputation is concerned: "there is a better than that—a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God! A fair exchange, if by the loss of reputation we can purchase the lowest degree of purity of heart!" Last year, he said farewell to scholarship. Now, he repeats it to trifling company. Quest again is accorded first place.

John Wesley's quest widened its means this year to include the most High Church ways it ever used.

Monday, April 21, 1777, at the "laying the foundation of the New Chapel" at City Road, London, Wesley's sermon sketched the rise and spread of Methodism. His reference to the Holy Club was: "They were all precisely of one judgment, as well as of one soul: all tenacious of order to the last degree, and observant, for conscience's sake, of every rule of the church, and every statute, both of the university, and of their respective colleges. They were all orthodox in every point; firmly believing not only the three creeds, but whatsoever they judged to be the doctrine of the Church of England, as contained in her articles and homilies."¹⁹ The major exception to the practice of the Early Church was their not "having all things common."²⁰ Such a veneration was receptive to past ecclesiastical regulation.

A greater degree of such regulation came in the person of John Clayton, whose entry into the Holy Club has been noted above. He was a strong High Churchman,²¹ and for his ways found willing co-laborers in the Wesleys. They adopted these High Church ways.

1. John Clayton, having known it himself, directly or indirectly got John Wesley to read the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles. They are a compilation of materials "from a very ancient date" to A.D. 400 in eight books. Their purpose was to "present a manual of instruction, worship, polity, and usage for both clergy and laity."²² The work closes with a list of eighty-five canons—that is, rules. Avidly, Wesley read and studied them and accorded them equal authority with the Bible—"made antiquity co-ordinate with Scriptures,"²³ he put it. For a man of one Book, this was a grave variation. However, while he quoted at times from these books, his rating of their authority changed. The Scriptures regained their primacy.

2. Writing in this October to Richard Morgan, Sr., of Holy Club practices, and mentioning the two earliest, doing good and communicating regularly, Wesley continued: "To these, by the advice of Mr. Clayton, we have added a third—the observing the fasts of the Church, the general neglect of which we can by no means apprehend to be a lawful excuse for neglecting them."²⁴ This means the Wednesday and Friday fasts, to which the Constitutions gave this precedent: "He [Christ] commanded us to fast on the fourth and sixth days of the week; the former on account of His being betrayed, and the latter on account of His passion."²⁵

Just here, pause a while to correct the error of Bishop Hurst's claim that Clayton led the Wesleys to the "observance of the stations of the cross."²⁶ An early piece of Christian literature, *The Pastor of Hermas*,²⁷ calls fasting a "station." And Tertullian, the Christian lawyer of Carthage who lived in A.D. 145–220, referred to Peter's going to the temple to pray as his keeping a "station."²⁸ He intimates, too, that fasting is a station. John Telford refers to Tertullian's naming fasts as stations.²⁹ It is likely, therefore, the only stations the Wesleys kept were these fasts.

3. The use of Saturday. Sometime in June–July, John Wesley wrote to Clayton,³⁰ asking how he spent it. He had no difficulty over the two fast days, but was concerned over what a Christian should do on Saturday.

The Apostolic Constitutions enjoined: "Keep the Sabbath," because it is the "memorial of the creation . . . the joy for the creation."³¹ There was difference between all other Sabbaths and one—Saturday of

Holy week. That one Sabbath, "inasmuch as the Creator was then under the earth," ought to be kept as a fast: the others, as festivals.³² Clayton told Wesley he used his Saturdays as festivals: "I do not look upon it as a preparation for Sunday, but as a festival itself; and, therefore, I have continued festival prayer, for the three primitive hours, and for morning and evening, from the Apostolical Constitutions. . . ." The primitive hours might mean three times a day as in Daniel 6:10; or the earlier hours of a day; three, six, nine o'clock; or six, nine, twelve o'clock. In keeping these hours, Clayton said he used the prayers prescribed by the Constitutions, which would be "A Prayer Declarative of God's Various Creations,"³³ the one following it, and the thanksgiving prayers for morning and evening.³⁴

The extent to which John Wesley followed this Saturday observance is nowhere recorded. The fact that it disappears from notice indicates it was discarded. It is clear, however, that for a time he gave serious attention to days, one of the "beggarly elements"³⁵ of the practice of the Christians in Galatia.

4. The mixed chalice in the communion. The mixed chalice means that the wine at communion was mixed with water.³⁶ The reason for this is the representation of the water and blood which followed the soldier's spear thrust at the Crucifixion. Apostle John, who alone recorded this, understood it in a spiritual sense: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. . . . And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood. . . ."³⁷

Clayton's letter to Wesley shows that the mixed chalice was used in some Oxford churches; that he preferred its use; that were he in a place where it was unused, he would urge its use; and that its lack was no reason for abstaining from communing.

Pertinent here is the question of John Wesley's position upon the mixed chalice. His query of Clayton evidences a concern but is no indication of a pro or con attitude. January 4, 1749, he wrote to Dr. Conyers Middleton, "You cannot be ignorant of this fact—that the cup used after the paschal supper was always mixed with water."³⁸ The Doctor held the mixed chalice as an abuse of the original communion, but Wesley stoutly supported its use. This approval of it came sixteen years after the present year. Whether or not he was practicing it that late, he surely was defending it. Several of the Wesleyan eucharistic hymns keep the two, blood and water, together, as in the thirty-first:

O Rock of our salvation, see
 The souls that seek their rest in Thee;
 Beneath thy cooling shadow hide,
 And keep us, Saviour, in Thy side;
 By water and by blood redeem,
 And wash us in the mingled stream.

The sin-atonement blood apply,
 And let the water sanctify,
 Pardon and holiness impart,
 Sprinkle and purify our heart,
 Wash out the last remains of sin,
 And make our inmost nature clean.

The double stream in pardon rolls,
 And brings Thy love into our souls;
 Who dare the truth Divine receive,
 And credence to Thy Witness give,
 We here Thy utmost power shall prove,
 Thy utmost power of perfect love.³⁹

5. Confession. "Did the Oxford Methodists recommend confession?" Tyerman asks; and answers, "It would seem they did."⁴⁰ Hurst is more reserved: Wesley "advised something near akin to confession."⁴¹

The evidence is this: A "Miss Potter," probably the daughter of Bishop Potter, became one of the Methodists. Later, by September, 1733, she left them. The reason for it, John Clayton saw thus: "I wonder not that she is fallen. Where humility is not the foundation, the superstructure cannot be good." His letter to Wesley continues: "And yet I am sorry to hear the tidings of her, especially that she has a great man for her confessor."⁴² This might mean Clayton was adverse to confession. It surely does mean he did not agree with a certain person's accepting a particular man as her confessor.

Another piece of evidence is a letter of John's sister Emily to him, "written at this period."⁴³ She wrote: "To lay open the state of my soul to you, or any of our clergy, is what I have no inclination to do at present; and I believe I never shall. I shall not put my conscience under the direction of mortal man as frail as myself. To my own Master I stand or fall. Nay, I scruple not to say that all such desire in you or any other ecclesiastic seems to me like Church tyranny, and assuming to yourselves

a dominion over your fellows creatures which was never designed you by God.”⁴⁴ Hurst remarks, “The old Puritan spirit comes out in the letter of this sister, who had the Puritan blood in her veins.” John was Emily’s favorite brother and vice versa, though she was twelve years older than he. It could be that, during one of his recent visits to Epworth, they talked over John’s ways and the opposition he was meeting at Oxford because of them. Certainly, he might have suggested her confessing to him; for he undeniably was stiffening his stand since the Kirkham criticisms of June, 1732.

Such is the evidence. It is clear that Wesley gave more than serious consideration to confession. Bishop Hurst’s final conclusion was that it “was no part of a fixed discipline”⁴⁵ of Wesley’s.

Still, in another form, it became a continuing and a potent part of Methodism’s subsequent success. That form of it is seen in a letter of his written in December, 1751, to the Bishop of Exeter, who had written an attack upon the Methodists. Its title was, “Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared.” The charge of being Roman Catholics was hurled frequently at the Methodists. Wesley answered: “I began writing a letter to the comparer of the Papists and Methodists. Heavy work, such as I should never choose; but sometimes it must be done. Well might the ancient say, ‘God made practical divinity necessary, the devil controversial.’ But it is necessary: we must ‘resist the devil,’ or he will not ‘flee from us.’”⁴⁶ His answer comprised fifty sections, filling thirty-six pages of fine print in his *Letters*.

To prove his case, Bishop Lavington of Exeter stated eight items. John answered each, and then proceeded to gather up some “fragments.” The Bishop’s fifth point was that of confession: the Methodists “use private confession, in which every one is to speak the state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, and answer as many searching questions as may be.”

John’s rebuttal is: “But this has no resemblance to Popish confession; of which you are very sensible. For you cite my own words: ‘The Papish confession is the confession made by a single person to a priest.’ Whereas this is the confession of several persons conjointly, not to a priest, but to each other.”

The Bishop asserted these “private confessions taken in their bands” were reported to John Wesley, and the delinquents were “confessed by him” privately. This is a misunderstanding of Wesley’s procedure. His followers were organized into societies. Within these, especially earnest Methodists were gathered into bands. Members of both were interviewed

one by one by Wesley, his purpose not being confession or to discuss previous intrasociety or intraband statements but to inquire into their spiritual condition and progress. The statements made by members of bands and societies were more personal religious testimonies of what the Lord had done for them, made in the interest of building one another up in their religious experience, work and practice.⁴⁷

Tradition as equal to Scripture, fasting, meticulous use of certain days, mixed chalice, confession, Book of Prayers—these, along with John Wesley's other and personal "prudential means," brought him to a distinctive status in religious concerns. It is not inconsistent, therefore, that he did contemplate now the formation of an organized society with its own rules. He wrote to John Clayton for his judgment upon the proposal.

Living in Manchester was a Dr. Thomas Deacon. Like Clayton and Wesley, he was a devotee of those ancient ways of the Constitutions. About Wesley's plan of a Society, Clayton consulted him: "I was at Dr. Deacon's when your letter came to hand, and we had a deal of talk about your scheme of avowing yourselves a Society, and fixing upon a set of rules. The doctor seemed to think you had better let it alone." Dr. Deacon's reasons for such counsel seem to have been these: "To what end would it serve? It would be an additional tie upon yourselves, and perhaps a snare for the conscience of those weak brethren that might chance to come among you. Observing the stations and weekly communion are duties which stand upon a much higher footing than a rule of a Society; and they who can set aside the command of God and the authority of His Church will hardly, I doubt, be tied by the rules of a private Society."⁴⁸

For the nonce, this matter is dismissed. However, it indicates that Wesley's practical sense saw the solid, enduring benefits of close fellowship and of common creed and practice. Seven years from now, he will form a distinct Methodist Society, whose only requirements for admission were these two: "A desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from sins."⁴⁹

To date, then, these things are the zenith of Wesley's High Church ways. Some of them will be dropped, but some will appear in his work in Georgia. Other church ways will never be surrendered. Most important: whatever he kept and added will be overlaid by, and subordinated to, the spirit of vital, personal experience and the maintenance of the realities of personal and social Christian practice.

At this time in John's quest, the coexistence of these High Church

modes and of the evangelical reach of the sermon on "The Circumcision of the Heart" calls for a remark. So seldom have these two appeared together that they might be taken easily as mutually exclusive, inherently so. That is not true. What is true is the difficulty of yoking them workably. Disciplined spiritual vitality, of the evangelical degree, is both feasible and necessary: the author of Psalm 47 joined praise and understanding; and, upon the ecstatic Corinthian Church, Paul enjoined, by his own example, the marriage of spirit and understanding in prayer, of understanding and the spirit in song, and of intelligibility and understanding in speaking. It can be maintained that John Wesley attained their union. It began here, where ritual is quite full blown and where vitality appears in formulated statement and in ardent quest.

This year's close sees an unusual approval of the Wesleys as teachers, plus a *caveat* of their religious ways. Above, it has been seen that the early death of William Morgan was made by many into a pretext for severe criticism of the Club. In this, the father, Richard Morgan, Sr., at first joined. John's long review of the attendant circumstances relieved the father's mind.

Now, in September, Mr. Morgan wrote to Charles Wesley about putting his other son, Richard, Jr., aged nineteen, under his care at Oxford. He wrote to Charles: "I can think of no other for his tutor but yourself." Inasmuch as Charles Wesley had students, it was Mr. Morgan's right to select his son's teacher. There is no hint that John felt the choice was a slight of himself or of a continuing dislike of him by Mr. Morgan. Both brothers wrote to Mr. Morgan by October 20th, when he answered them, writing to Charles and saying, "I acquiesce under your opinions. . . . I desire he may be entered . . . under my good friend your brother's tuition."⁵⁰ Exactly what moved Mr. Morgan to change his mind about the tutor of his son Richard is not specified. The son was not a tractable student or religiously earnest person. Some of the reason for this lay in what the father told John Wesley his religious requirements for his son were. "I would have him live a sober, virtuous, and religious life, and to go to church and sacrament according to the statutes of his college; but for young people to pretend to be more pure and holy than the rest of mankind is a dangerous experiment."⁵¹

Requirements for admission to the Holy Club are seen in John's attempt to allay Morgan's fear for his son: "Of his being admitted into our Society (if it deserves so honourable a title) there is no danger. All those gentlemen whom I have the happiness to converse with two

or three times a week upon a religious account would oppose me to the utmost should I attempt to introduce among them at those important hours one of whose prudence I had so short a trial and who was so little experienced in piety and charity."⁵²

It is probable that Wesley's own résumé of his quest to date is this from his *Journal*: "And now I knew not how to go any further. . . . Yet when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort or any assurance of acceptance with God. At this I was then not a little surprised; not imagining I had been all this time building on sand, nor considering that 'other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid' by God, 'even Christ Jesus.'"⁵³

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1734

THIS is a rather quiet year. Wesley's admission, "I knew not how to go any further," sets its pattern: not knowing of any other whom or what or where to go for help, there could be no marked advance in his quest; and some former matters are concluded finally.

Criticism of the Holy Club began on January 14th, when young Richard Morgan wrote to his father. He sailed from Ireland on October 21st, last year, arriving in due time at Oxford. By the above date, he reports upon his situation. Though not a member of the Holy Club, he attended its meetings. It had now seven members. His account of their procedures is this: "From six to seven they read over the petitions of poor people and relieve their wants, dispose of pious books, and fix the duties of the ensuing day. They told me very solemnly that, when I had acquired a pretty good stock of religion, they would take me in as an assistant. When we are all met, my tutor reads a collect to increase our attention; after that a religious book is read all the time we are together. They often cry for five minutes for their sins; then lift up their heads and eyes, and return God thanks for the great mercies He has showed them in granting them such repentance, and then laugh immoderately as if they were mad."¹

Wesley's heavy religious content in his tutorial curriculum, his limiting Morgan to company or books of which he approved, made a hard road for Richard. He was in the "greatest misery." He warned his father: "If I am continued under Mr. Wesley I shall be ruined"; and concludes, "Though I have the greatest desire to improve myself, I would choose to return to my office, and forego the advantages of an university education, rather than suffer what I do at present by being his pupil."

Wesley saw this letter; read it; and wrote Richard's father an explanation of his ways. Morgan, Sr., stood by John, and wrote his son on January 31st, "I vowed to you before, and now I vow again, that if you

follow an idle, vicious, or extravagant life,² you shall never inherit my fortune."

Young Richard came to a better mind about Wesley's ways. Less than a year later, on November 27, 1735, he wrote to Wesley: "I read every Sunday night to a cheerful number of Christians at Mr. Fox's (Oxford). Mr. Fox and his wife are most zealous Christians, and are earnestly bent on going to Georgia."³ A wise, strong, devout teacher and an earnest Christian group in the university town were vast and valuable aids to a student far from home.

This Morgan affair elicited from John Wesley three items which should be noted. The first is his graphic characterization of some formal religious persons who "retain something of outward decency" as those "who seriously idle away the whole day, and reputably revel till midnight."⁴

The next is his present conception of religion. "I take religion to be, not the bare saying over so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private; not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly life; but a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer."⁵

The third outlines his understanding of the Christian faith this way. "God everywhere declares (1) that without doing good as well as avoiding evil shall no flesh living be justified: (2) that as good prayers without good works attending them are no better than a solemn mockery of God, so are good works themselves without those tempers of heart from their subserviency to which they derive their whole value; (3) that those tempers which alone are acceptable to God, and to procure acceptance for which our Redeemer lived and died, are (i) Faith, without which it is still impossible either to please Him or to overcome the world; (ii) Hope, without which we are alienated from the life of God and strangers to the covenant of promise; and (iii) love of God and our neighbour for His sake, without which, though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, yea, and our bodies to be burned, if we will believe God, it profiteth us nothing."⁶

His definition of religion is an excellent one from the viewpoint of what is to be gotten: its pattern is, first, an inner spirit, nature; then, an agreeing outward life.

The outline, too, is excellent in its pattern of before and after. Its

serious omission is the way by which it is to be obtained. Justification is made to depend upon one's doing good and avoiding evil. Christ lived and died to "procure our acceptance" of the proper Christian tempers. He makes no connection between sin and justification and Christ's death. These positions are way below those of his sermon of January 1st, last year, on "The Circumcision of the Heart."

June 26th, John Wesley wrote to William Law for counsel as to what he can do with a religiously recalcitrant student of his.⁷ A "young gentleman of good sense, an even generous temper, and pretty good learning," but of little acquaintance with religion, he had been awakened partly by Law's two books to a "true notion and serious practice" of religious ways.

When Lent began, John advised him to "obey the order of the Church" for the forty days; but he did not, averring his health would not permit any abstinences. By Easter, he limited also the time he spent in matters religious, and was "convinced any time was too much" for religion. May found him not communing, because "to partake of it implied a fresh promise to renounce himself entirely and to please God alone; and he did not design" to do this.

A "few days" before John wrote Law, he besought this student to tell him upon what grounds he based any hopes of salvation. The answer was: "Christ died for all men; but if none were saved by Him without performing the conditions, His death would not avail one in a thousand, which was inconsistent with the goodness of God." This, he soon gave up, "adding with the utmost seriousness that he cared not whether it was true or no; he was very happy at present, and he desired nothing farther."

"I am now entirely at a loss what step to take," John wrote to Law. It is no wonder he was baffled. This young man's thought joined the death of Christ and a man's "performing the conditions," which was exactly the broad pattern of John Wesley. That the only condition for appropriating the inherent benefits of Christ's atoning death was faith, John does not know now and, therefore, could not show this student his error. The student and teacher were on the same level. And William Law helped him not.

The year closes with a long letter to his father, in which he reviews, amplifies, and adds to the fundamental principles which governed his life and his quest. It is needful to note and to comment upon these.

This letter came out of the question as to whether or not John should leave Oxford and take the Epworth parish of his ailing parent. During a visit of John's to Epworth, late in 1732 or early in 1733, his mother probably had mentioned this change and thought her son "very indifferent" about it. The fact was, John was unsure in his own mind concerning the move.⁸ November 20, 1734, Samuel, Sr., wrote John "pleading that, to preserve the fruit of his forty years' labour and on account of 'the dear love and longing which this poor people has for you,' he would accept the living." Some of Samuel's arguments will appear through John's quotes and replies. His replying was, to him, a very serious matter, as is shown by the length of his letter—twenty-six paragraphs; by the fact that, beginning it on December 10, John, at its close, noted, "Ended December 19, 1734"; and, especially, by his opening sentence: "The authority of a parent and the call of Providence are things of so sacred a nature that a question in which these are in any ways concerned deserves the most serious consideration."

Such consideration included these matters:

1. The father had reminded his son that "the glory of God and the different degrees of promoting it are to be our sole consideration and direction in the choice of any course of life." John agrees: "I do not say the glory of God is to be my first or my principal consideration, but my only one; since all that are not implied in this are absolutely of no weight: in presence of this they all vanish away; they are less than the small dust of the balance." The First Commandment, then, is both first and only with John: and Christ's word, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light," is accorded its proper place in his sentence, "So long as I can keep my eye single and steadily fixed on the glory of God, I have no more doubt of the way wherein I should go than of the shining of the sun at noonday."

Next, he interprets this glorification of God in these concrete terms: "That course of life tends most to the glory of God wherein we can most promote holiness in ourselves and others. I say in ourselves and others, as being fully persuaded that these can never be put asunder." Inward and outward holiness are still his central aim. How fully the counsel of that "serious man" of Lincolnshire, that the Bible knew naught of solitary religion, and how completely John has repudiated the false principles of that "contemplative man," appear in his sturdy assertion that promotion of one's own holiness is inseparable from one's own inculcation of it in others. John Wesley's sound Christian genius is seen in this conviction. Many persons in the last quarter-century

have attached significance only to others' welfare, assuming that such altruistic concern secured themselves automatically. Wesley had the true balance. It cannot be denied that now he has crying need of help from others—his whole quest asserts this: and he is sure he can be aided most, as well as aid others most, at Oxford.

2. Close attention should be given the reasoning by which John supported the indissolubility of mutual increase in holiness. He asks, "How is it possible that the good God should make our interest inconsistent with our neighbour's? that He should make our being in one state best for ourselves, and our being in another best for the Church? This would be making a strange schism in His body; such as surely never was from the beginning of the world. And if not, then whatever state is best on either of these accounts is so on the other likewise. If it be best for others, then it is so for us; if for us, then for them."

The broad fact in this reasoning is that, in the essentials of their relation to God, the Gospel regards all men as alike: their condition, their need, their salvation—in each, men are alike. Here is seen an anticipatory formulation of what will become Wesley's insistence upon the fundamentals of our "common Christianity" as obligatory to every man. Referring to the mystics, John quotes approvingly Professor August Francke's criticism of them: "They do not describe our common Christianity, but every one has a religion of his own."⁹

In these foundation principles, advance of holiness in oneself as requiring advance of it in others, the like status of all men before God, and the binding nature of "common Christianity," lie the urge to evangelism; and to Christian living and serving.

3. Still, the irreducible fact is, someone must begin something, and that to begin he must find first. Finding requires seeking, and the seeker alone must determine where to seek. In unknown areas, what man can guide another? Confronted with the choice of Oxford or Epworth, John Wesley must decide. Therefore, his question is, "Which of these have I rational ground to believe will conduce most to my own improvement? And that not only because it is every physician's concern to heal himself first, but because it seems we may judge with more ease, and perhaps certainty too, in which state we can most promote holiness in ourselves than in which we can most promote it in others."

4. John defines the "holiness" to be promoted. "By holiness I mean not fasting (as you seem to suppose), or bodily austerity, or any other means of external improvement, but the inward temper, to which all these are subservient, a renewal of the soul in the image of God. I

mean a complex habit of lowliness, meekness, purity, faith, hope, and the love of God and man."

John's quest has made progress. First, Quester Wesley attended to the observance of customary but neglected religious practices—acts, that is, outer in nature. Next, he turned inward, mostly to thoughts. His method of procedure was his sedulous watching against breaches in his practices and against vilenesses in his thoughts. Now, however, the inner has become not merely a matter of thoughts, but a temper of soul—a "renewal of the soul in the image of God." Such renewal and its consequent temper produce a "complex habit" of specified and sought virtues. By complex, he must mean the presence in his life of all the listed virtues at the same time: by habit, he must mean all these are there steadily. The broad thesis of the sermon of January 1, 1733 repeats itself here, but that sermon and this letter differ widely in what they say of love. In the former, love of God is "added" by man; and this love of God implies love of man: but, in the latter, both love of God and love of man arise in that "inner temper," that "renewal of the soul in the image of God." At length, John has the depth in man's personality at which the Gospel of Christ aims first and has recognized the need of alteration in that depth. The Gospel's mode of that change, he does not know yet: but persistent seeking is bringing increasing finding: slowly and surely, the Gospel's pattern in becoming clear.

5. For the promoting of this holiness in himself, Oxford affords him several advantages. There is daily association with like-minded friends, who are "enlightened so as to see, though at a distance," that their great work is the "recovery of that single intention and pure affection which were in Christ Jesus." Their overseeing, reproving, advising, and exhorting him compose a "blessing he has not found any Christians to enjoy" in England. For one who, to date, had visited very little of England, this seems a brash statement, until one recalls his wide reading and his acquaintance at Oxford with men from other parts of the British Isles. John was not guessing in this evaluation of men of the Holy Club. President of the group he was, but he needed its members, a need attested unto by Solomon,¹⁰ Amos,¹¹ Malachi,¹² and Paul.¹³

6. He has retirement, seclusion. Part of this was little bother from trifling people. Even less bothered was he by lukewarm Christians—that is, "persons that have a great concern but no sense of religion." Such people he describes now for the first time by the phrase of John Valdeso, "saints of the world."¹⁴ It will become a theme in Wesley's work.

7. To freedom from such people, his "next greatest advantage" was

"freedom from care." He wrote of this: "I hear of such a thing as the cares of this world, and I read of them, but I know them not. My income is ready for me on so many stated days, and all I have to do is to count and carry it home. The grand article of my expense is food,¹⁵ and this too is provided without any care of mine. I have nothing to do but at such an hour to take and eat what is prepared for me. My laundress, barber, etc., are always ready at quarter-day; so I have no trouble on account of those expenses. And for what I occasionally need, I can be supplied from time to time without any expense of thought." Smug and selfish and unsocial, this seems. It is to be remembered that the writer was a man whose youth was spent in continued poverty next to want; that he had a strong strand of the scholarly recluse in him; that he was no laggard in the charities of the Holy Club; that the list of his affluences, now and all his life, was very small; and that, for most of his long life, this same man will be utterly unmoved by any money motive, or by any love of lengthy ease.

8. If John's letter to his father has harsh spots, so also had his father's letter to him; for, in his arguing against academic life in favor of a ministerial one, Samuel Wesley, Sr., implied the former was a life lazy and useless. Referring to slothfulness, the son said, "There is not so contemptible an animal upon earth as one that drones away life." He allows the "superlative degree of contempt to be on all accounts due to a college drone." Yet, though there are students and tutors at Oxford who are the "lumber of creation,"¹⁶ the "abuse does not destroy the use."

With reference to the charge of uselessness, John turned himself inside out in a self-revelation. He opens with the "one postulatatum," that the "help which is done on earth God does it himself." Therefore, "if God be the sole agent in healing souls, and man only the instrument in His hands, there can no doubt be made but that the more holy a man is He will make use of him the more," because such a holy man will be more willing, more fit, more submissive, more effective in prayer, more wide in his reach, and more able to be used by God to renew His image in others. Should any wonder why Wesley did not apply now to his own need his first principles, and appeal directly to God for what he has been seeking, he should note that John now knows of no human instrument of God able to release him! There is to his credit the fact that, thus far, he had given attention to such prospective human helpers as have appeared.

Should anyone wonder why John Wesley was not now the human

instrument of God in helping others, as later he did, his own answer is in this baring of himself: "Sometimes I cannot do good to others because I am unwilling to do it: shame or pain is in the way; and I do not desire to serve God at so dear a rate. Sometimes I cannot do the good I desire to do because I am in other respects too unholy. I know within myself, were I fit to be so employed, God would employ me in this work. But my heart is too unclean for such mighty works to be wrought by my hands. Sometimes I cannot accomplish the good I am employed in, because I do not pray more, and more fervently; and sometimes, even when I do pray, and that instantly, because I am not worthy that my prayer should be heard. Sometimes I dare not attempt to assist my neighbour, because I know the narrowness of my heart, that it cannot attend to many things without utter confusion and dissipation of thought. And a thousand times have I been mercifully withheld from success in the things I have attempted, because, were one so proud and vain enabled to gain others, he would lose his own soul."

This self-analysis is frank, honest, ruthless. It leaves one in a sure conviction that he has hidden nothing of himself from himself or from his father. It is a seething soul, one sees. Impotence, resulting from his unfitness and unworthiness—this is the inner John Wesley. The measure of his present inadequacy to minister to others appears sharply in his reply to his father's argument that Epworth parish would be a "larger sphere of action," since there John would have the care of two thousand souls. "Two thousand souls!" John exclaims. "I see not how any man living can take care of an hundred." Yes—this is now the man who will travel five kingdoms and a dozen isles, preaching to millions and keeping watch over fifty times the number of folks at Epworth!

9. Samuel, Sr., argues further: the people of Epworth are now very favorably disposed towards John's becoming their rector and, hence, he will be a success there. To this latter point, John's answer is the blunt question, "Have you found it so in fact? What have you done there in so many years?"

Concerning the "present prejudice" of the Epworth folk in his favor, the son said, "How long will it last? Only till I come to tell them plainly their deeds are evil, and, to make a particular application of that general sentence, to say to each, Thou art the man!¹⁷ Alas, sir, do I not know what love they had for you at first? And how have they used you since? Why, just as everyone will be used whose business it is to bring light to them that love to sit in darkness." These are harsh words. They stirred ugly memories in the father, undoubtedly. Remember, it

is the boy, whose life these people nearly took, whose home they burnt, whose meager food they destroyed, and whose father they neglected, who is hurling pent-up and hot-hearted words of just indignation and of stark realism.

10. This long letter ends with its longest section devoted to the son's persecution at Oxford. John's father had written that he had better come to Epworth, because not only had he been unsuccessful at Oxford but also had brought upon himself disfavor sufficient to make his future there barren.

Beginning his answer with the sentence, "I am not careful to answer in this matter"—that is, he will soften nothing to spare anyone; and calling his father's charge, "that he who is despised can do no good," the "stronghold of all the unbelieving, the vainglorious, and the cowardly Christians," he thus defines the contempt of the world: "Under which term I include all the passions that border upon it, as hatred, envy, etc., and all the fruits that flow from them, such as calumny, reproach, and persecution in any of its forms."

Then ensues John's detailed reply:

A. "Every true Christian is contemned, wherever he lives, by all who are not so, and who know him to be such—i.e., in effect, by all with whom he converses; since it is impossible for light not to shine."

B. "My next position is this: Until he is thus contemned, no man is in a state of salvation. . . . Nor is it possible for all the trimmers between God and the world, for all the dodgers in religion, to elude this consequence, which God has established, and not man, unless they could prove that a man may be of the world—i.e., void both of the knowledge and love of God—and yet be in a state of salvation. . . . Though a man may be despised without being saved, yet he cannot be saved without being despised."

C. He expands. "How can contempt be necessary to salvation? I answer, as it is a necessary means for purifying souls for heaven; as it is a blessed instrument of cleansing them from pride, which else would turn their very graces into poison; as it is a glorious antidote against vanity, which would otherwise pollute and destroy all their labours; as it is an excellent medicine to heal the anger and impatience of spirit apt to insinuate into their best employments; and, in a word, as it is one of the choicest remedies in the whole magazine of God against love of the world, in which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Him."

D. Finally, comes this: "The being contemned is absolutely necessary to a Christian's doing his full measure of good in the world. Where,

then, is the scribe? Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Where is the replier against God with his sage maxims? 'He that is despised can do no good in the world; to be useful, a man must be esteemed; to advance the glory of God, you must have a fair reputation.' Saith the world so? But what saith the Scripture? Why, that God hath laughed all the heathen wisdom to scorn. It saith that twelve despised followers of a despised Master, all of whom were of no reputation, who were esteemed as the filth and offscouring of the world, did more good in it than all the tribes of Israel. It saith that the despised Master of these despised followers left a standing direction to us and to our children: 'Blessed are ye (not accursed with the heavy curse of doing no good, of being useless in the world) when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for My name's sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' "

These bold words concerning opposition are not mere braggadocio but are a warrior's defiance to a known and reckoned foe. Recall that for the past five years Wesley has met the varying and widening advance of this foe: therefore, he is not ignorant of it; nor imagining its existence; not afraid of it. The irrefragable proof of his words lies in his quiet and persistent battling with persecution for most of his life.

Some of the detail of this letter has been met hitherto in other connections. What is most distinctive in it is his sturdy, almost violent, independence of spirit. It here exhibits itself in relation to his life's work and with reference to his father.

Quite a prelude there is to his arriving at this independence! In May, 1725, John began to ask counsel of his mother.¹⁸ He continued to do so until eight years later, when, in February, 1733, he cuts loose appreciably from her.¹⁹ From 1714 to 1720, John was under his older brother Samuel at school. In this present matter, Samuel opposed²⁰ John's remaining at Oxford instead of going to Epworth, and John fought back till March, 1735, when he obtained a ruling from Bishop Potter in his favor, which silenced Samuel. Finally, he now asserts independence with reference to his father. It was no easy task for John, requiring the vigorous verbal sword-lashings quoted above. Though not easy, it was good for John: he will be forced oft to stand alone.

As far as known letters are concerned, these two are the last of father to son and of son to father. The next year, on April 25, Samuel Wesley, Sr., will have left earth's battlefield. It was fitting, then, that John closed with this encomium: "For yourself, I doubt not, but when

your warfare is accomplished, when you are made perfect through sufferings, you shall come to your grave, not with sorrow, but as a ripe shock of corn, full of years and victories. And He that took care of the poor sheep before you was born will not forget them when you are dead."²¹

Sometime in this general period, John Wesley met and counseled with one whom he designates only as a "contemplative man," both whose identity and the time of John Wesley's meeting him are not specified.

What he advised Wesley was this: "Soon after a contemplative man convinced me, still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God. But even of his instructions (though I then received them as the words of God), I cannot but now observe: 1. That he spoke so incautiously against trusting in outward works that he discouraged me from doing them at all. 2. That he recommended (as it were, to supply what was wanting in them) mental prayer, and the like exercises, as the most effectual means of purifying the soul, and uniting it with God. Now these were, in truth, as much my own works as visiting the sick or clothing the naked; and the union with God, thus pursued, was as really my own righteousness as any I had before pursued under another name."²²

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN JOHN WESLEY'S religious quest, the year 1735 is divisible into two parts, and the point of division is his leaving England for America in October. This chapter is concerned with the preceding nine months: January–September, and with the matters therein which are pertinent to his quest.

The first of these is his coming to an understanding of Christian liberty. Having ceased for two years, as far as extant letters indicate, writing to his mother for counsel, he resumes it on January 13th. "I have had a great deal of conversation lately on the subject of Christian liberty. . . ." ¹ Remembering the past year's mounting criticism of him, on account of his religious singularity and strictness, it is evident that, though he resisted such criticism, he did not ignore it but allowed it to bring him to self-criticism of his accepted ways. Exhibited here are a good conscience, good sense, and a bit of the scientific temper. The first expression of that temper is to assemble the available data on any given subject. With reference to Christian liberty, John Wesley did this, finding that "different persons take it in at least six different senses."

They are these:

1. "For liberty from wilful sin, in opposition to the bondage of natural corruption."

2. "For liberty as to rites and points of discipline. So Mr. Whiston says² though the stations were constituted by the Apostles, yet the liberty of the Christian law dispenses with them on extraordinary occasions."

3. "For liberty from denying ourselves in little things; for trifles, 'tis commonly thought, we may indulge in safety, because Christ hath made us free. This notion, I little doubt, is not sound."

4. "For liberty from fear, or a filial freedom in our intercourse with God. A Christian, says Dr. Knight, is free from fear on account of his past sins; for he believes in Christ, and hope frees him from fear of losing his present labour or of being a castaway hereafter."

5. "Christian liberty is taken by some for a freedom from restraint as to sleep or food. So they would say, your drinking but one glass of wine, or my rising at a fixed hour, was contrary to Christian liberty."

6. "Lastly, it is taken for freedom from rules. If by this be meant making our rules yield to extraordinary occasions, well: if the having no prudential rules, this liberty is as yet too high for me; I cannot attain unto it."

Inasmuch as this subject is of the greatest importance, a few brief comments are in order upon the six items in his list of January.

The first, wilful sin and natural corruption, will find permanent place in his later teaching and preaching.

The second, liberty in rites and discipline, John Wesley will exercise with becoming care. Rites, customs, means of grace, church orders and even Sacraments will be allowed a bit of flexibility but mostly to meet the requirements of reaching people with the Gospel. This will be true only after 1738.

The third, the nonextension of self-denial to trifles, he doubted as sound: and this is wise. The "little foxes" spoil the "vines"³ of genuine piety as well as the "great red dragon."⁴

The fourth has great place in John Wesley's quest, for it thrusts death before him again. His *Journal's* résumé of this time records the nearness of death (his father's?) disclosed his soul as comfortless and fearful before it. His quotation from Dr. Knight⁵ states the content of his fear as fear of retribution, fear of losing one's labors, and fear of the Final Judgment. He is aware of the ineffectiveness of his past religious labors in attaining this end. Though he does not specify retribution as hell, yet it surely is present. Absence of these fears and the presence of their opposites constitute the relation of "filial freedom in our intercourse with God"—that is an immediacy, a frankness, a completeness of fellowship such as Longfellow attributed to Hiawatha and Kwasind:

Straight between them ran the pathway;
Never grew the grass upon it;
Singing birds, that utter falsehoods,
Story-tellers, mischief-makers,
Found no eager ear to listen,
Could not breed ill-will between them,
For they kept each other's counsel,
Spake with naked hearts together. . . .⁶

Or it was such a fellowship as Jesus put in His words, "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."⁷ John wanted even more: "The faith I want is the faith of a son."⁸

Wesley's opposition to the fifth is evidenced amply in his opposite conduct for the last several years. His fasting, spare eating, early rising, general plain living—all attest to his denial of softness as a legitimate mode of Christian living.

The sixth item of this list is highly significant, for it has Wesley's own thoughts concerning what Christian liberty is. Related to this section are the "rites and points of discipline" of the second section and the "freedom from restraint" of the fifth.

His position is twofold. First, he is persuaded fully that rites, discipline and rules should "yield to extraordinary occasions." However, he does not specify what such occasions are. Judging by his later varying, extraordinary occasions would be free prayer; outdoor preaching; use of lay preachers; and employing women in teaching,⁹ in administering,¹⁰ and in speaking¹¹ (preaching, really) in his chapels providing they sat¹² while doing so. The sacraments and fundamental morals were never included in the classification of extraordinary occasions.

Second, he passes judgment upon Christian liberty as the absence of any "prudential rules." Recall here Wesley's distinction between God's ordained means of conveying His grace and those unordained by Him but wise for a person to use, such as for John Wesley to rise at a "fixed hour" in the morning. It is likely he meant not at the present time in his life but later, that both these kinds of means should yield to some degree under unusual circumstances.

He is not concerned so much now with ordained matters but with those prudential rules: and, regarding these latter, he is concerned with those who would have no prudential rules at all. Those so doing justified their deed by their claim that they are living upon such an exalted moral and religious level as transcends need of guiding, regulating, culturing and strengthening rites, rules and disciplines.

Such a claim has been met twice in John's recent experience. It occurred in his contact with that "contemplative man"; his derogatory estimate of all outward religions so jolted Wesley as to discourage him in his use of them; and his exaltation of a mystic, self-achieved union of the soul with God appeared as a kind of life which obviated any need of rite, discipline, or rule.

Again he met it a little over two years ago, when he became acquainted with mysticism through William Law. Upon the present theme, Law would write: "Christ is the church or temple of God within thee. There the supper of the Lamb is kept. When thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee."¹³ Wesley's comment on this will be, "This is right pleasing to flesh and blood; and I could most easily believe it if I did not believe the Bible."¹⁴ Taking this quote and reply out of its time, and putting it here, is done only to illustrate one of the main areas of teaching in Wesley's day by which any rites, disciplines or rules as commonly understood and inculcated in the Christian Faith were supposed to become unnecessary. The greater justification for its use here consists in the facts that William Law before 1735 had become a mystic; and that John Wesley, by his own admission, was involved in its coils.

It is against such a background that one must estimate Wesley's judgment of the place of prudential rules in the quest of Christian experience. He sees what is the ground of their omission by some. Then, that cold, intellectual, critical, practical deposit in John Wesley's personality asserts itself. How powerfully it now does so, one cannot say; but it could be that the genesis of his future discard of mysticism is here in this discussion with his mother of Christian liberty. His judgment, "This liberty is as yet too high for me; I cannot attain unto it," with its allowing the possibility of a future attainment of such an exalted state, is generous and scientific in the temper of Saint John's exhortation to "try the spirits whether they are of God."¹⁵ Historically, such a rite and rule-obviating state, from being "too high" for him, will become inadequate; next, it will become un-Scriptural; and by 1736, will be repudiated.

Upon these "several notions which good men entertain" about the liberty of a Christian, John asked his mother's "thoughts." Her reply is not available as a letter, but the gist of what she wrote appears in three paragraphs of the letter John wrote her on February 14th. "I should be exceeding glad to know (1) who those writers are whom you term Perfectionists? (2) What those tracts are which distinguish them from other writers? and (3) What is good therein and what is bad?" It is hardly probable to say from this what her general attitude was. It is clear she had referred to certain writers as "perfectionists," but it is not at all clear whether her mentioning these men was done

in approval, warning or disapproval of her son. It is likely her remarks were too general to afford John any position justifying discussion: he can ask only who were those she mentioned.

The other two brief paragraphs are these:

"Give me leave to say once more that our folks do, and will I suppose to the end of the chapter, mistake the question.

"Supposing him changed? say they. Right; but that supposition has not proof yet—whatever it may have: when it has, then we may come to our other point, whether all this be not providence, i.e., blessing. And whether we are empowered so to judge, condemn, and execute an imprudent Christian, as God forbid I should ever use a Turk or Deist." It is likely, "our folks" were either the Wesley family at Epworth only or they and some of the parishioners. Whoever they were, and whatever they thought, John accused them of mistaking the question in hand—the limits of Christian liberty. The "him" refers quite likely to John. His reference to providence or blessing appears to imply that a certain situation regarded by "our folks" as a calamity might be otherwise. John is certain the judgment passed upon some imprudent Christian, whether within the just powers of those judging or not, was such as he would never pass upon Turk or Deist. Whatever the particulars, some people at Epworth were in vehement opposition to some one.¹⁶

To state the question again and to counteract the wrathful belligerence, in his February 14th letter to Susannah, he reiterates and expands his former letter.¹⁷ His specification of the kinds of people who have or have not certain liberties is this:

- 1—"Natural men" do not "enjoy a liberty from wilful sin." Christians do.
- 2—"Awakened sinners" have no liberty from slavish fears." Christians do.
- 3—"Infant Christians" or "weak" ones have no liberty in things of an indifferent nature. Christians, matured and strong, do. "The further anyone advances in Christianity," "the more" this liberty "is enlarged."
- 4—"The Jews had no liberty as to external ordinances, to set them aside pro tempore, on extraordinary occasions." A Christian has such liberty.
- 5—"All Christians have a liberty as to Rules":

- (i) "to lay aside those prudential rules which we no longer need;

- (ii) "to suspend those we do not need upon extraordinary occasions;
- (iii) "to alter those we do not either lay aside or suspend continually, as the state of our soul alters."

To this February 14th letter of her son's, Susannah Wesley did not reply, though he definitely asked her to do so upon the point of rules. However, when John's letter was discovered in 1931, it was found to contain these notes for her answer: "The visible order of providence is to be observed by all whether strong or weak, in the faith (now in order to this),¹⁸ and this can't be done nor Civil Government be established and the due subservience of one man to another preserved without ensigns of authority, and difference in houses, furniture and apparel, all which are marks of distinction, and as such, in obedience to the will of God and not for vainglory, they ought to be used, and he that breaks his rank and goes out of character so far as he does so, so far he breaks the eternal order of the universe and abuses his Christian liberty."

Her general position is that of staunch, unvarying adherence to order—"the eternal order of the universe." Part of that order is civil government, with its classes of men distinguished by external markings of an outward kind. All these are never to be feeders of vainglory but are to be used in obedience to divine order. Whoever offends breaks this divine order. She seems to imply an accepted analogy between civil government and religious establishment and to maintain that variation in the latter by anyone is an abuse of Christian liberty. Whether or not John ever read this paragraph sketch of his mother's proposed reply is not known.

Thus, in the early months of 1735, singular Christian, seeker by self-discipline, and mystic struggle in the soul of John Wesley, seeker after God. The significance of this exploration of the field of Christian liberty for John Wesley's religious quest lies in the fact that he has come to quite definite conclusions concerning sin, rites, self-denial, close fellowship with God, self-discipline and variation in rules. His investigation discloses a willingness to hear others, coupled with an independence of judgment. It discloses, too, an alliance of himself with every justifiable liberty involved: and it must be admitted that, without human liberty even with reference to God himself, the Gospel has little relevance.

John Wesley's religious singularity faces him again in the question of his accepting Epworth parish. His long letter to his father of last December seemed conclusive in that matter. Rapid decline in his father's health aroused some of his family to put pressure upon him. Beginning on Christmas Day, John and brother Samuel threshed the matter until March. February 8th, he wrote John: "The order of the Church stakes you down"—that is, obligates John to take a parish in preference to university work. His brother appears to have overlooked or to have kept silent about his own case: Samuel, too, was ordained and, therefore, was obligated to parish work; yet all the while he had been a teacher. February 13th, John bluntly reminded him of this incongruity: "The tutor who, being in orders, never accepts a parish is perjured." Hurst adds: John "seems to have yielded ultimately to the earnest pleadings of his father and brother, and, no doubt, also the united appeals of his mother and sisters, who would otherwise lose their home."¹⁹

John yielded to the point of inquiring in mid-April about the possibility of his having Epworth parish, but was unsuccessful, because some reports, true or false, of his "strictness of life" had operated against him. Tyerman assigns this refusal as responsible in part for Wesley's decision to go to Georgia.²⁰

Twice in these nine months, there came to Wesley's quest close contact with death.

One of these was the passing of his father at sunset of April 25th in Epworth rectory. Then ended a life of sixty-nine years,²¹ of which forty-five were spent in the ministry, and of these thirty-eight or thirty-nine were spent at Epworth. The preceeding September, he had been compelled to relinquish a course of parish visitation.²² By January, he could not walk about his room.

Charles Wesley's account of his father's final hours, written April 30th to brother Samuel, and described by Adam Clarke as "the most circumstantial," is as follows:

Epworth, April 30th, 1735.

Dear Brother, After all your desire of seeing my father alive, you are at last assured you must see his face no more, till raised in incorruption. You have reason to envy us, who could attend him in the last stage of his illness. The few words he uttered I have saved. Some of them were, "Nothing too much to suffer for heaven. The weaker

I am in body, the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God. There is but a step between me and death. Tomorrow I would see you all with me round this table, that we may once more drink of the cup of blessing, before we drink of it new in the kingdom of God. With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I die."

The morning he was to communicate, he was so exceedingly weak and full of pain, that he could not, without the utmost difficulty, receive the elements, often repeating, "Thou shakest me! thou shakest me!" But immediately after receiving, there followed the most visible alteration. He appeared full of faith and peace, which extended even to his body; for he was so much better, that we almost hoped he would have recovered. The fear of death he had entirely conquered; and at last gave up his latest human desires, of finishing Job, paying his debts, and seeing you. He often laid his hands upon my head, and said, "Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not." To my sister Emily he said, "Do not be concerned at my death; God will then begin to manifest Himself to my family." When we were met about him, his usual expression was, "Now let me hear you talk about heaven." On my asking him whether he did not find himself worse, he replied, "O my Charles, I feel a great deal. God chastens me with strong pain; but I praise Him for it; I love Him for it." On the 25th, his voice failed him, and nature seemed entirely spent; when on my brother's asking, "Whether he was not near heaven?" he answered distinctly, and with the most of hope and triumph that could be expressed in sounds, "Yes, I am." He spoke once more, just after my brother had used the commendatory prayer. His last words were, "Now you have done all." This was about half an hour after six; from which time till sunset he made signs of offering up himself, till my brother having again used the prayer, the very moment it was finished, he expired.²³

John Wesley later wrote: "With the same cheerful countenance he fell asleep, without one struggle, or sigh, or groan."²⁴ He, too, added this to the record: "My father, during his last illness, which continued eight months, enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once. 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness,' said he to me, 'that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity.'"²⁵

April 28th, he was buried "very frugally" yet decently in the Epworth churchyard, "according to his own desire." And upon his tombstone, son John would preach the Gospel of the "inward witness" to such crowds as would justify amply his father's prophecy of a revival of the Christian faith in England.

Estimate of the relation of Samuel Wesley's demise to John Wesley's quest can be made best after one has the data of the second impinging of death upon him. This year, John Wesley published three things: his own translation of Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, and a *Sermon*. It is this *Sermon* which is in place here: "*Sermon CXL.—The Trouble and Rest of Good Men.** Preached at St. Mary's, in Oxford, on Sunday, Sept. 21, 1735. Published at the request of several of the hearers. 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest,' Job iii, 17." In the edition of Wesley's *Sermons*, edited and published by Thomas Jackson in 1825, so reads the heading.

The asterisk directs attention to the editor's descriptive footnote, in which is found this related data: this was "the first Sermon that Mr. Wesley ever committed to the press"; out of print for ninety years, it is here republished as an "authentic, and not uninteresting specimen of his preaching at that time"; it "exhibits a very inadequate view of real Christianity"; the "preacher attributes the sanctification of human nature, in a great measure, to personal sufferings; assumes that the body is the seat of moral evil; and that sin exists in the best of Christians till they obtain deliverance by the hand of death"; and this, "viewed in connection with his subsequent writings, is of considerable importance, as it serves very strikingly to illustrate the change which took place in his religious sentiments previously to his entrance upon that astonishing career of ministerial labour and usefulness, by which he was so eminently distinguished." That is, it contains Wesley's beliefs on death before his quest ended.

For present purposes, it is needful to understand what (if it was that) Seeker Wesley's "very inadequate view of real Christianity" was. To come to such comprehension, it is necessary to put this sermon in its setting; to set before one a résumé of it; and to evaluate that résumé.

The sermon's setting includes, first, the death of his father only five months ago. It was the first serious breach by death in the Wesley family circle. The other deceased children died when John was too young to take notice—that of the twins, for example: and the first of the living children to die would be the youngest, Kezzy, who would succumb in

1739, aged 28. His father's passing, therefore, is the first experience of death which broke any lengthy and intimate relations, left a sense of emptiness or loss, wrenched his affections, aroused any possible regrets, and stirred memory. Such an event shakes the soul.

Moreover, not only did his father die but also John saw him die. What he saw is, most likely, thus recorded in this sermon: "Take a view of one who lies on a sick or death bed. Is this he that was 'made a little lower than the angels'? How is the glory departed from him! His eye is dim and heavy; his cheek is pale and wan; his tongue falters; his breast heaves and pants; his whole body is now distorted, and writhed to and fro, now moist, and cold, and motionless, like the earth to which it is going. And yet, all this which you see is but the shadow of what he feels. You see not the pain that tears his heart, that shoots through all his veins, and chases the flying soul through every part of her once-loved habitation."

Naturally, the long hours of bedside watching brought review of his father's troubled life. This is the next part of the sermon's setting. John could recall that hostile parishioners and neighbors had burnt down Epworth rectory twenty-six years ago, nearly causing him to lose his life. "Alas, sir, do I not know what love they had for you at first? And how they used you since? Why, just as every one will be used whose business it is to bring light to them that sit in darkness,"²⁶ is John's characterization of the general treatment accorded his father at Epworth and is his expression of his own rankling at it. And, then, upon all this comes death, oft resented by loving survivors, especially so when these have, to set alongside a troubled life and a painful death, no such measure of the reward for enduring faithfulness as that Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 16:26. Also, there was the crass, crude, heartless, greedy spirit of Mrs. Knight, who scarce could wait the burial's end ere impounding the deceased's stock for debt.

Third part of the setting is his own arduous labor to find God. For ten years now, it has continued, increasing in its intensity and range. In addition, he has been laughed at, labeled, lampooned, criticized, reviled, despised, hated, and persecuted. Is he not recording the cause of his own defeat when, in this sermon, he refers to "that wavering, fickle, self-inconsistent creature, sinning and repenting, and sinning again"?

The mood induced by such experiences would be one unlikely to engender clear thought and balanced judgment.

Thus far, the setting: now, the résumé of the sermon.

The origin of trouble in this life, he explains this way. In God's original creation, it did not exist in any aspect. The external world was "perfect in beauty": man was "perfect in holiness." And "as his holiness was, so was his happiness. Knowing no sin, he knew no pain. . . ." Then, the "whole scene was changed in a moment." Sin "was conceived"—this is all he says here of the origin of evil. As the result of sin, pain came: man's soul became corrupt; his body became mortal, subject to death. Hence, "the whole world is, indeed, in its present state, only one great infirmary. All that are therein are sick of sin."

Therefore, man's "one business is to be healed." For this healing, the great "Physician of souls is continually present," noting every case and prescribing remedies. These "are often painful" but their object is healing; hence, their attendant pain is not vindictive nor its kind or measure too great for any patient's disease: the Physician "allots just as much pain as is necessary to their health." This "pain of cure must be endured by every man."

Part of the cure is this: "The very wickedness of others is, in a thousand ways, conducive to a good man's holiness."

"Perfect holiness is not found on earth. . . . Some remains of our disease will ever be felt, and some physic will be necessary to heal it." For this residual unholiness, the only cure is death. "Death will deliver us. Death will set those free in a moment who 'all their lifetime were subject to bondage.' Death will destroy at once the whole body of sin, and therewith its companion—pain. And therefore, 'there the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.'"

Given in the introduction to his sermon, these are Wesley's basic principles.

The body of the sermon, in Part I, considers the theme, "How the wicked here trouble good men."

John answers first: "Wicked men trouble those who serve God." This is saying whom they trouble, not how. "There is an irreconcilable enmity between the Spirit of Christ, and the spirit of the world." This is saying why the wicked trouble, not how. "And so it must be till all things are fulfilled." This declares the continuation of the whom and why, not the how. The how is this: words and deeds. The wicked will "say all manner of evil against the good falsely"; and will treat them "as their forefathers did their Master."

He adds: "It is true, these troubles sit heaviest upon those who are yet weak in the faith, and the more of the Spirit of Christ any man gains, the lighter do they appear to him. So that to him that is truly

renewed therein, all the wrongs of wicked men are not only no evils, but are matter of real and solid joy. But still, though he rejoices for his own sake, he cannot but grieve for theirs."

Good men are "much more troubled at the injuries wicked men are continually offering to God"! Such injurers and their injuries are: "How are we surrounded with those who blaspheme the Lord and His Anointed; either reviling the whole of His glorious Gospel, or making Him a liar as to some of the truths He hath graciously revealed therein! How many of those who profess to believe the whole, yet in effect, preach another Gospel; so disguising the central doctrines thereof, by their new interpretation, as to retain the word only, but nothing of 'the faith once delivered to the saints'! How many who have not yet made shipwreck of the faith are strangers to the fruits of it! It hath not purified their hearts; it hath not overcome the world." Wesley does not "descend to particulars, which are endless," but contents himself with these general ways in which wicked men trouble the good.

"It is not so with their souls in paradise. In the moment wherein they are loosed from the body, they know pain no more. Though they are not yet possessed of the 'fulness of joy,' yet all grief is done away." They are free from reviling, persecution, injustice, malice, fraud, blasphemers, Sabbath breakers.

Moreover, they are at rest "from all those infirmities and follies" which are unescapable in this life." In this matter, John does descend to details:

They are no longer exposed to the delusions of sense, or the dreams of imagination. They are not hindered from seeing the noblest truths, by inadvertence; nor do they ever lose the sight they have once gained, by inattention. They are not entangled with prejudice, nor ever misled by hasty or partial views of the object: and, consequently, no error is there. O blessed place, where truth alone can enter! truth unmixed, undisguised, enlightening every man that cometh in the world! where there is no difference of opinions; but all think alike; all are of one heart, and of one mind: where that offspring of hell, controversy, which turneth this world upside down, can never come: where those who have been sawn asunder thereby, and often cried out in the bitterness of their soul, "peace, peace!" shall find what they then sought in vain, even a peace which none taketh from them.

From both this paragraph and the preceding one, it is evident that John

is so nigh overwhelmed by life's troubling by the wicked, especially his own experience of their evil animus, that he cannot see heaven's joys objectively but only through the lens of surrounding evil: hence, his earthy and negative description of it is this: what earth has, heaven has not.

Finally, the good are free from "all sin." This is a "deliverance, in sight of which all the rest vanish away. This is the triumphal song which every one heareth when he entereth the gates of paradise: 'Thou, being dead, sinnest no more. Sin hath no more dominion over thee. For in that thou diedst, thou diedst unto sin once; but in that thou livest, thou livest unto God.' "27

His next paragraph has this amazing statement about the dead: "The blood of the Lamb hath healed all their sickness, hath washed them thoroughly from their wickedness, and cleansed them from their sin. The disease of their nature is cured; they are at length made whole; they are restored to perfect soundness."

Finally, the state of a Christian at his entrance into the other world includes this: he has "just subdued his last enemy, death"! He represents such a one as saying to death, "At length, I have parted from thee, O my enemy; and I shall see thy face no more! I shall never more be unfaithful to my Lord, or offend the eyes of His glory; I am no longer that wavering, fickle, self-inconsistent creature, sinning and repenting, and sinning again. No. I shall never cease, day or night, to love and praise the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my strength." So does he characterize and dismiss the agent, which, elsewhere in this same sermon, he recognizes as the only one which can induct him into these listed blessings.

The sermon ends with this application:

My brethren, these truths need little application. Believe ye that these things are so? What, then, hath each of you to do, but to "lay aside every weight, and run with patience the race set before" him? to "count all things" else but "dung" and dross; especially those grand idols, learning and reputation, if they are pursued in any other measure, or with any other view, than as they conduce to the knowledge and love of God? to have this "one thing" continually in thine heart, "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up?"—to have thy "loins" ever "girt," and thy "light burning"?—to serve the Lord thy God with all thy might; if by any means, when He requireth

thy soul of thee, perhaps in an hour when thou lookest not for Him, thou mayest enter "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest"?

Having before one this quite complete synopsis of the sermon, how shall he evaluate it?

First, there are parts of it which are unobjectionable. The state of man as God created him; the world as "one great infirmary" through sin: the spiritual therapy of pain: the wicked's troubling those serving God: the "irreconcilable enmity" between these two: the grief of the good over the wicked: the wrongs done by the wicked to those "truly renewed in the Spirit of Christ" and "full of the knowledge and love of God" understood as "joys": the evil of the wicked as affronting God: the classification of despisers, blasphemers, professed believers who empty the Gospel "by their new interpretations," and of those who are strangers to the fruits of the Gospel, as wicked: the existence of a rest for the weary: the existence of evils which could have been prevented by prudence or piety: some evils as "inseparable" from this life: evils as the "consequence of sin": surcease of bodily pain hereafter: rest from delusions of sense and dreams of imagination: hindered sight of the "noblest truths": prejudice: the misleading of hasty or partial views of one's object: differences of opinions: controversy: and abiding peace—to these, taken in themselves, there can be no objection.

Taken in themselves, however, in this sermon they cannot be; for John Wesley put them in the strangest company one will find in all his work. Therefore, second, there are these grave objections.

1. His first fatal error is the omission of the character of Adam's sin, which was disobedience. Consequently, John's understanding of the meaning of suffering as healing is, to say the least, imperfect; for, in the Scriptures, the reason for it is not to give healing but to teach obedience. Even Christ, in the flesh, "learned obedience by the things which he suffered."²⁸ Being obedient, He was "made perfect." Adam lost personal perfection and unbroken fellowship with God through disobedience; but Christ, in the flesh, kept both by His obedience, as He said: "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."²⁹ Sufferings, in themselves, have no value. Their value consists in the opportunity they afford for learning obedience. Obedience it is which leads to personal perfection and to unbroken fellowship with God—this the Bible teaches.

2. With reference to the cure of the sickness of sin, John says these

two things: "The very wickedness of others is, in a thousand ways, conducive to a good man's holiness"; and, "It is true, these troubles sit heaviest upon those who are yet weak in the faith, and the more of the Spirit any man gains, the lighter do they appear to him. So that to him who is truly renewed therein, who is full of the knowledge and love of God, all the wrongs of wicked men are not only no evils, but are matter of real and solid joy."

Observe several points herein.

Such a good man, John now fetches out of nowhere. If all in the world are sick of sin, where are these good men and whence came they? He does not say. Moreover, who are they? Judged by his premises, the good could be those who accept the curing remedies allotted by the Physician, while the wicked could be those who rebel at such cures and who persecute those accepting them.

Does Wesley believe, or imply, there must be wicked men, in order that their wickedness might enable the good to grow in goodness? Would any man, really good, hold such a thesis? John does do a bit better in admitting these wicked-fed good men "cannot but grieve" for the wicked ones who are their needful food. He should have said that the mis-examples of evil men could become, both to other wicked men and to those striving to be good, negatively helpful in a minatory ministration. As his words stand, they smack of the hypocrisy of "Holy Willie's Prayer."³⁰

John Wesley is not asserting that one's sufferings, either of the wicked or the good, are any atonement for sin. This sermon has but one statement about atonement, a very strange one at that. Sin, being only a sickness, atonement is dismissible. He is saying that the wickedness of the wicked aids the good in their goodness and, therefore, is a joy to the latter.

In accordance with his illogical distinction between the wicked and the good, in this world the wicked remain wicked but the good do not become entirely perfect. "Perfect holiness is not found on earth. . . . Some remains of our disease will ever be felt . . . either as the consequence of sin, or for the cure of it." Inasmuch as the sickness of sin must be cured (Wesley seems insistent upon this point): and inasmuch as all cures of earth are but partially effective, "some physic will be necessary to heal" the sin-sickness perfectly. What is this final remedy? "Who, then, will 'deliver' us from 'the body of this death?'" John asks, and answers: "Death will deliver us. Death will set those free in a moment, who 'were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Death

shall destroy at once the whole body of sin, and therewith its companion—pain. . . . For in the moment wherein they shake off the flesh, they are delivered, not only from the troubling of the wicked, not only from pain and sickness, from folly and infirmity; but also from all sin. . . . This is the triumphal song which every one heareth when he enters the gates of paradise: 'Thou, being dead, sinnest no more. Sin hath no more dominion over thee. For in that thou diedst, thou diedst unto sin once; but in that thou livest, thou livest unto God.' " This is the third major objectionable part of this sermon.

Here is a subtly appealing but misleading, un-Scriptural, and astounding teaching: coming from John Wesley's pen, it smites one as so utterly foreign as to be unbelievable.

For clear consideration, isolate exactly what he is asserting. By definite statement, he does not include the out-and-out wicked, in this final deliverance in the complete cure. This itself is an illogical position, in the light of his general principles. These are: sin and the body are one and the same; all men, wicked and good, have bodies and are sinful; therefore, there are no wicked men troubling good ones but only wicked men troubling each other; every one dies; death "destroys at once the whole body of sin"; therefore, all are saved! John did not follow out this logic to its conclusion, but that conclusion is inherent in his principles: and his failure to do so marks his positions as quite arbitrary.

Equally surprising is another of his positions about death. He invites us to "view, a little more nearly, the state of a Christian at his entrance into the other world." Such a one "has just subdued his last enemy, death." Hitherto, in Part I of the sermon, the work of death has been that of destroying the "whole body of sin." Thus, death is not a consequence, punitive or of some other character, but is an agent, the final agent, of redemption. Now death has also the work of destroying itself! The Christian (his former good man?) by his own dying destroys his own death. Far, far is this from I Corinthians 15:25-26.

In all he said about the remedy for sin, John Wesley has only one statement of the place of the blood of Christ in it. "There, then, 'the weary are at rest.' The blood of the Lamb hath healed all their sickness, hath washed them thoroughly from their wickedness, and cleansed them from their sin. The disease of their nature is cured; they are at length made whole; they are restored to perfect soundness."

An alert Wesley idolator would be instant in pointing out the possibility that John's use of the verb's perfect tense, "hath healed," could indicate his placing this operation of the blood of the Lamb in the time

before one's death. This could be so, but is it? The placement of it in a section on the hereafter answers no. The same answer is given by the logic of John's principles. Earlier in this sermon, as has been shown, he declares that healing, cleansing, wholeness, and soundness will never be known in this life but only in the world to come: therefore, whatever agent produces these results must operate in that world: death and the blood of Christ produce them: therefore, they operate, not in time, but in eternity. Death, then, destroys the body of sin and ushers the soul into eternity: in eternity, the soul is cleansed completely by the blood of Christ—"new born into the world of spirits."³¹ Is not this what John Wesley means?

These unbelievable positions provoke two questions. If the blood of the Lamb did not operate redemptively in heaven, as heaven is understood commonly, did Wesley believe in a middle state in which it did purge from all sin? There is no answer, except as his own positions do not exclude such a possibility. Did the logic of his principles, as given in the introduction of this sermon, drive him to exclude atonement in this life: but, unable to banish it (from primitive times on, men have been unable to escape the conviction that, concerning themselves and their deity, something sacrificial and atoning must be done), did he give it this un-Scriptural sphere of efficacy? Its position, whatever that is, is the answer. Anyone familiar with Wesley's gospel of the fifty years of his active ministry will be astonished at the above data, so much so that some will deny John Wesley ever even thought of such things. He will be astounded also at his omission of the victory over death which Samuel, Sr., gave, and which son John heard—the inner witness, the praise and love of God for pain, the certainty of heaven and eagerness for it—all this John omitted. Here he has an example of composure, peace, certainty and joy in the face of not imminent but of certain death which antedates that of the Moravians during the storm at sea. Yet John's sermon has none of this; but, in the section which could be a reference to his father's dying, he describes only the physical deterioration, not the spiritual exaltation. Worst of all: he has no reference to the Resurrection!

Asking the reason for this omission can lead to much speculation. Avoiding this, the better reply is by relating the sermon to one, if not the dominant, phase of Wesley's quest.

Remember that this John Wesley is not the John Wesley of May 24, 1738 and after, but is the Wesley of September, 1735: he now is not the assured convert but the wide seeker. In the course of that seeking,

he came, as has been mentioned, upon mysticism through personal visits to William Law. Not yet having found what he was seeking, not knowing where to seek rightly, and knowing the national reputation of William Law, Wesley sought him. Law had begun to turn mystic, and introduced Wesley to mysticism. It appealed powerfully to John, so much so that he admitted it was the only rock upon which he nearly made shipwreck of his faith. He who has read and studied Wesley's other sermons and has put this present one beside them is able to measure how vastly they differ from this, which is as un-Wesleyan as can be. Moreover, one who has read and studied this sermon and who, then, reads the long critical letter to Law senses unmistakably the likeness of the two: both are heavily mystic. This sermon, then, is an expression of the depth Wesley went into mysticism and of the distance he departed from the Gospel. It was his theological nadir. It is no wonder, therefore, that it was not republished for ninety years, or thirty-four years after his death.

Nor is there any wonder that John closed his record of his religious search and status at this time with his discouraged confession, "In this refined way of trusting to my own works, and my own righteousness (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers), I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or help therein."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

JOHN WESLEY's quest now widens greatly. Its geographic scene widens from England in the Old World to America in the New World. Travel by foot and horse will be exchanged for travel by sailing ship, bringing him to the southeastern front door¹ of North America. This crossing the Atlantic Ocean to Georgia is the longest distance from England he will ever traverse.

Conditions will widen. Oxford quiet and order are superseded by turbulent sea and equally tumultuous habitat. Students are exchanged for sailors, emigrants, Indians. The teacher will be modified much by the pioneer minister. Englishmen as human associates will be joined by Germans, who in matters religious will supplant his countrymen.

His quest will widen to its next-widest. At times, it will appear to be submerged to disappearance, but it will be alive always and will be advancing solidly in ways surprising and permanent. The course of his voyage will be that of leaving things old, encountering things stormy, and arriving at things new and growing: it will picture the character of his quest. On the whole, he will acquit himself well. It is difficult to see how two so-called "spots" in Wesley's Georgia record, which really disclose the complete devotion of the man to his calling, can be considered a heavy discount except by such folk as are akin to those whom Solomon described as "glad at calamities."²

John most likely sensed the significance of his journey to the New World, for he characterized it as "This New Era."³ His context reads: "I hope, from the moment I leave the English shore, under the acknowledged character of a teacher sent from God, there shall no word be heard from my lips but what properly flows from that character: as my tongue is a devoted thing, I hope from the first hour of this new era to use it only as such, that all who hear me may know of a truth the words I speak are not mine but His that sent me."

The forces bringing John Wesley to America were two: first, is historic fact; second, personal motive.

"In October, 1735, my brother, Mr. Ingham, and I were induced, by a strange chain of providences, to go over to the new colony in Georgia. Our design was to preach to the Indian nations bordering upon that province; but we were detained at Savannah and Frederica, by the importunity of the people, who, having no other ministers, earnestly requested that we would not leave them."⁴ This states clearly the fact that these four considered themselves missionaries to the American Indians in Georgia.

The "strange chain of providences" conducing to their so going comprises these, as far as John Wesley especially is concerned.

The first link of the chain was the assertion of his grandfather, John Westley, "The call of God to preach is a missionary call."⁵ This is to say that a compulsion to bear a witness of Christ to others is inherent in the Gospel and in the very nature of any Christian experience. The Gospel field is "the world." Its command is, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

John's father had had the same understanding and a desire to put it to use. About 1701, it is likely that he heard at Convocation in London something about missions which inspired him. Missions were in the air in Western Europe. Its first Protestant mission was begun by King Frederick IV of Denmark, who in 1705 founded a mission on the Coromandel coast of India.⁶ Perhaps it was report of the preparatory discussions of this work which moved Samuel Wesley, Sr., to draw up what he called a "scheme" for such work—"If," he added, "I went to the East Indies."⁷ This was done ninety years or so before the publication of William Carey's *An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*,⁸ an event regarded as the beginning of modern missions.

It was the Danish mission which strongly moved Samuel Wesley at first. His zeal for missions did not flag. It was alive and active in the time of the Georgia settlement. He was a personal friend of Oglethorpe's;⁹ and was deeply interested in his plan. The Charter of the Colony was issued in June, 1732. The Trustees' meeting of November 8, 1732, took this action: "Ordered a Commission for the Rev. Mr. Samuel Wesley at his own desire to take subscriptions and collect money for the purposes of the Charter." The result was, "Received from Mr. Wesley 5 guineas his benefaction"¹⁰—that is, twenty-five dollars and fifty-five cents. The meeting of April 18, 1733, voted him thanks for securing "a silver Chalice and Patine for use of the first Church in the Town of Savannah."¹¹ Ill as he had been, and only six months from

death, he wrote Oglethorpe, "My heart has been working hard for Georgia, and for my townsman, John Lyndal." The latter was from Epworth, and Samuel had taken charge of some affairs of his at home. He confesses he is "extremely concerned" lest the colonists plant "canes" and cause "an inundation of rum," but is pleased to hear mulberries and saffron will be raised. His letter continues, "I had always so dear a love for your colony, that if it had but been ten years ago, I would gladly have devoted the remainder of my life and labors to that place."¹² Such a spirit must have had an impact upon son John.

Susannah Wesley, too, had a missionary spirit. When John was a boy of eight or so years of age, she came across some report of the recent Danish mission to India, whose effect she thus put in a letter to her husband in London: "Soon after you went to London last, I light on the account of the Danish missionaries. I was, I think, never more affected with anything; I could not forbear spending good part of that evening in praising and adoring the divine Goodness for inspiring them with such ardent zeal for His glory. For several days I could think or speak of little else."¹³

Notice here the fact that Susannah's brother Samuel Annesley had gone some years ago to Surat in India. Around 1716, he had sent home notice of his returning, and she journeyed to London to meet him. He was reputed to be wealthy. He never came; and died in India in 1732.¹⁴

Properly, therefore, did Adam Clarke conclude: "In the Wesley family the seeds of missionary zeal were early sown. The same spirit that would have carried the father to Abyssinia, India, and China afterward carried his son across the Atlantic to preach the gospel to the different tribes of American Indians."¹⁵

To the chain, three other links are to be added. The one was the actual existence of the colony in Georgia and Oglethorpe's presence in England at the time. He returned in 1734, bringing with him Tomo-Chichi, chief of some of the Creeks.¹⁶ He was presented to King George II. His presence in England "aroused national interest."¹⁷

The second link was a sermon by John Wesley's friend Dr. Burton. At St. Mary-le-Bow on Thursday, March 15, 1732, he preached before the Trustees of the Colony on "The Duty and Reward of Propagating Principles of Religion and Virtue Exemplified in the History of Abraham."¹⁸ Of this, Wesley undoubtedly knew. The third was John's membership in the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, whose work "was specially directed to America."¹⁹ Such, then, is the "strange

chain of providences" which operated in bringing John Wesley to agree to going to Georgia.

These providences are external matters bearing upon him. What, let it be inquired now, were his inner, personal motives for going? Sometime before September 8, 1735, John had a personal conference with General Oglethorpe about his going to Georgia, and by the 18th had agreed to do so.²⁰ October 10th, he wrote Dr. Burton the "grounds of his design of embarking for Georgia." Therein, behold both quest and quester!

"My chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text; no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths, to reconcile earthy-mindedness and faith, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God; and consequently, they shall know of every doctrine I preach it be of God. By these, therefore, I hope to learn the purity of that faith which was once delivered to the saints; the genuine sense and full extent of those laws which none can understand who mind earthly things."

Such an expectation and the one who has it constitute this amazing spectacle: here is a man of thirty-two; trained with great care by parents of high moral, intellectual and religious character; of a fourth unbroken generation of university men; a university graduate; an elected and active fellow of a university; of a fourth generation of ministers; an ordained minister; widely read in the old and new books of his day, religious and otherwise; an earnest student, for the past five years, of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek; and an earnest, forthright seeker for God—yet he expects to find much more than he has, and all he now wants, among the forest aborigines of the New World! The incongruity of this is redeemed from the ridiculous only by the proven and passionate earnestness of the man himself.

The broad fact in this is that John Wesley is not regarding the prospect of work among the Indians as his serving them but as their saving him! They are another and a new area of his quest!

How are they to bring him salvation? His thought runs this way:

they have none of the sophistication, hypocrisy, sensuality and self-serving of much of the people of his homeland. They are of childlike simplicity, humble, willing to learn and eager to do the will of God. He will preach to them. Being unspoiled²¹ by so-named civilization, they will be able to tell him what of his "doctrine" is not of God and what is of God! So he will learn the purity of the faith and the genuine sense and full meaning of God's laws! This is an abysmal descent from the 1730 procedure of the "man of one book"—the Bible! Note that it has only an intellectual nature and reach. Aught of the heart, at least by specific mention, is not evident: he will "learn" the "true sense of the gospel of Christ . . . the purity of the faith." His salvation, therefore, seems to consist of this grasp of true doctrine and of pure faith. Though these are not the full content of salvation, they are indispensable antecedents to it. In his quest, was not Wesley looking for criticism of his beliefs, ruthless and competent, by anyone able to do it? Is he not heart-and-brain weary of the negative and incompetent criticism he has had in England?

He now understands adequately neither Indians nor salvation. The egregiously erroneous and the solidly sound mingle now. His need to know the true meaning of his preaching and of the Gospel; his claim he can learn this, at least in part, from merciless and sincere correction; and his desire, quest for it—these are solidly sound.

Quite unsound is his expectation of finding this confirmation or criticism of his Gospel in the area in which he intends to seek it. Years after the Georgia era, in 1744, Wesley recorded an interview which occurred at the time of his leaving for America. Its illuminating the seeker justifies its quotation here.

"It is now some years since I was engaged unawares in a conversation with a strong reasoner, who at first urged the wickedness of the American Indian, as a bar to our hope of converting them to Christianity. But when I mentioned their temperance, justice, and veracity (according to the accounts I had then received?) it was asked, 'Why, if those heathens are such men as these, what will they gain by being made Christians . . . by being such Christians as we see everywhere round about us?' I could not deny they would lose, not gain, by such a Christianity as this."²² This "strong reasoner," who was a woman,²³ was far more right about Indians than Wesley, as we shall see.

Equally illuminative of Wesley's soul is the gaze into it he affords by his listing the fruits of his learning from the Indians the true sense

of the Gospel. "A right faith will, I trust, by the mercy of God, open the way for a right practice." This sequence is solidly New Testament: faith precedes works; discloses its presence by its works; and is perfected by its deeds.²⁴

How and against what this practice operates is as follows. It will be effective "especially when most of those temptations are removed which here (in England) so easily beset me." Such temptations are: 1. "The desire of the flesh." In Georgia, "it will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offence, to live on water and the fruits of the earth. The simplicity of food will, I trust, be a blessed means of preventing my seeking that happiness in meats and drinks which God designed should be found only in faith and love and joy in the Holy Ghost." His allusions are to the opposition in England to his fastings and to his overeating when invited out to dine.²⁵ In Georgia, he will need no criticism upon dieting frugally. Frugal diet will be all he can have.

2. Women with appeal will not be present to lame his progress in mortifying the flesh; for Georgia will be the place, "where I see no woman but those which are almost of a different species from me"—that is, the Indian women. English women were hard to resist, but the aboriginal females are such as would constitute no temptation.

3. Georgia will afford him the boon of deliverance from "indulging the desire of the eye." In England, such occasions he confesses "compass me in on every side. But an Indian hut affords no food for curiosity, no gratification of the desire of grand or new or pretty things." Only the "cedars which God hath planted round (the hut) may so gratify the eye as to better the heart, by lifting it to Him whose name alone is excellent and His praise above heaven and earth."

4. "The pride of life," understood as the "pomp and show of the world," has "no place in the wilds of America." Pride "in general . . . has a place everywhere," but in Georgia are "very uncommon helps against it": the "deep humility of the poor heathens, fully sensible of their want of an instructor"; also "that happy contempt" (of pride) which attends any sincere instructor of such humble aborigines; and the sense of impotence which accompanies a "jealous attempt to convert our neighbour."

5. He expects to overcome "unfaithfulness to God in the use of speech," a "sin which easily besets" him.

6. He expects to find the Indians as people who, like the Early Church in Acts, "have all things common."

The naïve unreality of most of this is evident. How and how much of it he will unlearn will be seen later in the record of his stay in Georgia.

Just now, tarry to evaluate his broad positions. Is he not asserting the effectiveness of a right faith; and then, if not denying such effectiveness, limiting it to a condition in which most of his temptations do not exist? Is not this achieving morality through an imagined environment, instead of through faith? In the place of the adequacy of faith, is he not trusting to the fancied adequacy of mere geographic change? Is he not denying, in all this, any real power to faith? Is he not denying divine ability to meet faith properly in Oxford and London and limiting such operation to Georgia? Does not his ascription of such powers to an outward condition contradict all his claims of having understood and aimed at religion as inward? Is not this asserting outwardness as of major or sole importance in reaching inwardness? Is he not denying the soul of man is the prime area of temptation and, therefore, is such in any area? Finally, Elijah-like, Jonah-like, instead of fighting his fight in his own soul and land, is he not running away, as an escapist?

Notice that his specified personal temptations are few. None is new. Ten years ago, when he began his *Diary*, all these and others are listed. Of these, certainly idleness and immoderate sleep have been beaten. Fondness for food remains still, but in America he expects to overcome this. The closing clauses of what he wrote about women seem to savour of an espousal of celibacy—a matter which is, most likely, at the bottom of one of the two parts of Wesley's Georgia life, over which he has been much criticized.

John Wesley's second motive in going to Georgia reads: "I then hope to know what it is to love my neighbour as myself, and to feel the powers of that second motive to visit the heathens, even the desire to impart to them what I have received—a saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. But this I dare not think on yet. It is not for me, who have been a grievous sinner from my youth up, and am yet laden with foolish and hurtful desires, to expect God would work so great things by my hands; but I am assured, if I be once fully converted myself, He will then employ me both to strengthen by brethren and to preach His name to the Gentiles, that the very ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God."

Analyze this. The word, then, in the first sentence indicates none of this second motive will be feasible until after the fulfilling of the first

one. The inconsistency of his first motive's mode of fulfillment appears here again: he cannot impart to the Indians anything until he receives such impartable something from the Indians first! He cannot be converted until something from the Indians converts him: then he can convert them! However, this second motive has language which can constitute it as consequent upon, and different from, the first. That language is: "a saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ," and "If I be once fully converted." This differs from the first motive in the following way: he seeks some approval from the Indians that his doctrines are true; here, such confirmation will bring him a saving knowledge of the Gospel which will be tantamount to his being "fully converted." Then, he can impart to the Indians at least the testimony of that saving Gospel. Thus, the two motives do not clash. However, there remains the one unmentioned point: upon what grounds did he expect the Indians to be able to confirm his doctrine? For example: did he expect the Indians to judge between the sermon of January 1, 1733 on the "Circumcision of the Heart" and that of September 21, 1734, on "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men"? If so, he was setting them a task! His on-the-ground contacts with them in Georgia will furnish some detail concerning this question. "Methodism has sent out, since then, a thousand missionaries to heathen lands, but never one with so strange an equipment of motives as that under which its own founder sailed as a missionary to Georgia."²⁶

Such then being the quester who is desirous to expand his quest to the New World and to a New People, consider now how the opportunity of meeting each came to pass. It was the founding of the English Colony in Georgia and its purpose and needs. The story of this is as follows:²⁷

It began in a debtor's prison in London; spread to Parliament, to conscientious and concerned leaders, to a goodly part of the populace; and reached into Europe. Imprisonment for debt, religious persecution, and venturesomeness of pioneer spirit began it.

The year is 1728. Then an architect named Castel was put in London's Fleet prison for debt, where his health was failing. One day, a soldier friend of his, James Edward Oglethorpe, began to visit him. He continued to do so and, in his talks with his friend, he learned how the prisoners were treated. Stirred to the deeps of his anger at what he learned, Oglethorpe as a member of the House of Commons moved to have a committee appointed to investigate England's jails. He was made

its chairman. It investigated. "The country was shocked by the disclosures."²⁸ Proper actions were taken. These were radical doings in 1728. There can be no doubt but that these disclosures had some effect in bringing William Morgan and the Holy Club to their prison work in 1730. However, it was only a beginning. England's first major prison reformer, John Howard, was in 1730 only a four-year-old boy in London: his equally successful successor, the Quakeress Elizabeth Fry, would not be born for exactly fifty years.

One result of Oglethorpe's work was the release of many prisoners. Their condition reached his sympathies and, brooding over it, he conceived the plan of their settlement in the New World. He sought and secured a grant of land between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. A Board of Trustees was formed. They believed the policies to be followed were improvement of the colonists by discipline and "strong religious influences."

Meantime, the Archbishop of Salzburg in Bavaria issued, on October 31, 1731, an edict expelling 20,678 men, women and children from the city, because they were Protestants. Stirred England raised 33,000 pounds for their relief; and the Trustees for Georgia invited those who would to settle in their colony: and some did. Two of their pastors accompanied them, and Baron von Reck was their commissary. Selecting their site, they named it Ebenezer. Oglethorpe's first group came in 1732. These Salzburgers landed at Charleston, South Carolina, January 13, 1734. By May 7, 1734, Oglethorpe was in England, accompanied by some Indians, among whom were Tomo-Chachi, chief of a part of the Creek tribe; and his wife Sinauky.²⁹ Their desire for religious instruction, expressed by Tomo-Chachi, was: "We do not know good from evil, but desire to be instructed . . . that we may do well and be regarded amongst the children of the Trustees."³⁰

It is at this point of religion that the Wesleys enter the colonial project. It was noted above that the Trustees estimated this as one of the major powers for improvement of colony personnel. Reverend Samuel Quincy, a native of Massachusetts, educated in England, was the colony's first minister.³¹ His pastorate was brief, partly because he was away for considerable intervals, "leaving a wheelwright to read public prayers, comfort the dying, and bury the dead."³² Oglethorpe, writing of him to the Trustees, and quoting a letter from Wesley, reported his only fault was marrying an Indian woman to an English-

man, named Fitzwater, with Indians and colonists approving and Tomo-Chachi giving the bride away.³³ Hence, the Trustees must seek another.

Two events made possible the opening of Georgia to John Wesley: the death of his father and the return of Oglethorpe to England. Both occurred in April, 1735. Before his death, Samuel Wesley, Sr., had completed the writing of his work on the Book of Job. Its publication was put into the hands of son John. Dedicated to Queen Caroline, it was custom to present a copy to the dedicatee. In August, John came to London to do this. On the 28th, he met Dr. Burton, who the next day introduced him to Oglethorpe. The latter, knowing of John's father's vital interest in the colony, quite likely approached John about becoming the successor to Mr. Quincy.³⁴ Ere deciding, he consulted his friends: brother Samuel, William Law, John Clayton, John Byrom and his mother. Her reply was, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more."

Favorably impressed both by Oglethorpe himself and by the opening, John Wesley was. Dr. Burton was pleased: "Your short conference with Mr. Oglethorpe has raised the hopes of many good persons that you and yours would join in an undertaking which cannot be better executed than by such instruments. I have thought again of the matter, and cannot help again recommending the undertaking to your choice; and the more so since in our inquiries there appears such an unfitness in the generality of people; that state of ease, luxury, levity, inadvertancy observable in most of the plausible and popular doctors are disqualifications in a Christian teacher, and would lead us to look for a different set of people. The more men are inured to contempt of ornaments and conveniencies of life, to serious thoughts and bodily austerities, the fitter they are for a state which more properly represents our Christian pilgrimage."³⁵ It is a man of the pioneer temper Dr. Burton wants, and at Oxford he knew that was the stuff of which John Wesley was made.

September 28th, Dr. Burton wrote John a long letter, which he thus endorsed: "Advice concerning Georgia." To take advantage of the effect the "wonders of God in the deep" will have upon the people: to be very careful to labor on all the ships: to center his work at Savannah Town: to attend to nearby Indians: feed milk, not strong meat, since the "people are babes in the progress of their Christian life"; to meet the Society's aim to convert Negro slaves: to be careful of his "behaviour and manner of address," wherein at Georgia these will be a "nice³⁶ trial of Christian prudence"; that is the distinguishing between the

"indispensable and what is variable," between what is of divine and what of human authority, between singularities and the weighty matters of God's law—these comprise Dr. Burton's advice. They show Dr. Burton's knowledge of the basis of Oxford criticism of Wesley and his feeling his ways should be scanned closely by John himself. Quite poetic is the good Doctor's reference to the "wonders of God in the deep." That some of them would be stark terrors; that they would show the passengers, Wesley included, to be of two very diverse kinds; and that this revelation of disparity would move his young friend powerfully, Dr. Burton could not know. His word about the sea previewed other ends, but still it was prophetic.

Six young men planned to go. Two failed to do so. Matthew Salmon was taken by some of his friends and sent, "almost forcibly," to his parents' home in Cheshire. Westley Hall was brother-in-law to the Wesleys. He had jilted one of their sisters, Kezzy,³⁷ and, only two or three months before had married Martha.³⁸ Both Salmon and he were ordained specifically for this mission. Intending to take his bride with him, Hall had spent a hundred pounds upon housekeeping items and had hired a coach to take him and his wife to the place of embarkation, when he was informed that his objecting family had obtained a church benefice for him. Dismissing the coach, he abandoned the mission.³⁹

Charles Delamotte, aged twenty-one, was the son of a magistrate. His protesting father offered to set him up in business if he would stay in England, but he refused and went. Benjamin Ingham, aged twenty-three and a Yorkshireman, for the past three months had been preaching very successfully in places adjacent to London. In Georgia, he labored "with as pure and devoted a heart as ever throbbed in a missionary's bosom."

Charles Wesley, in the coming year to be twenty-eight, "up to this time had declined entering holy orders"; but, upon the persuading of Dr. Burton,⁴⁰ "was now ordained, that he might be able to officiate as a clergyman in the colony."⁴¹ He was to be Secretary to Oglethorpe and, for the Society, Secretary for Indian Affairs.⁴² For his work, he was the most unfitted of the four. Consequently, the venture was a hardship for him. "I took my degree," he wrote, "and only thought of spending all my days in Oxford. But my brother, who always had the ascendant over me, persuaded me to accompany him and Mr. Oglethorpe to Georgia. I exceedingly dreaded entering into Holy Orders but he overruled me here also, and I was ordained deacon by the Bishop

of Oxford, and the next Sunday, priest by the Bishop of London." Again, he said: "Jack knew his strength and used it. His will was strong enough to bend you to go, though not me to consent. I freely own 'twas the will of Jack, but am not yet convinced 'twas the will of God."⁴³

Here they are, then: one had no will to go but no strength to override his brother's will; one overrode his parents' will and went; one had quite pure purpose and no reservations; and one went in the primary hope of culminating his personal religious quest.

All was not gloom and uncertainty in things religious as these four were about to leave England. There were two bright rays. While Samuel Wesley, Jr., resided in London, there lived next to him a Reverend John Hutton, who was head of the College Street Society, one of several such in London. His son James was of the age of John and Charles, and the latter often stayed with the Huttons on their visits to London. Reverend Hutton asked John Wesley to preach to his Society. He did so from the text of Luke 10:42, "One thing is needful." John Simon says the "sermon made a deep impression. It led to the quickening of the Society. . . . James Hutton and his sister were much affected . . . 'as he had lived very wildly in the world his awakening became the more earnest; and so great was his affection towards the Wesleys, who had thus been instrumental in arousing him to a sense of his condition as a sinner,' that he felt a great desire to accompany them to Georgia." He also quotes Benham as estimating this as a "sort of preparation for the general awakening that afterwards took place."⁴⁴

The other bright ray, destined to shine for the time even farther than John Wesley's, was the emergence into the Evangelical Revival of George Whitefield. Between May 24 and September 3, 1736, he was ordained.⁴⁵ By the latter date, he was in London to preach at the "Tower and Ludgate prison." This was the beginning of a great stirring in religious things in London by the twenty-two-year-old Whitefield, whose preaching was described by one in the words, he "preached like a lion."⁴⁶ His work grew mightily and soon expanded to Bristol and Gloucester.

Notice now a remarkably dramatic instance of divine providence in so-called "dull" history. George Whitefield's success in London and Bristol "communicated to Methodism its first impulse and direction"⁴⁷ (he was an Oxford Methodist). John Wesley is in the New World, making beginnings and visioning a broad field there. In December of 1736, he will write to Whitefield: "Only Mr. Delamotte is with me,

till God shall stir up the hearts of some of His servants, who, putting their lives in His hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is so great and the labourers so few. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?" In his *Journal*, Whitefield wrote: "Upon reading this, my heart leaped within me, and, as it were, echoed to the call."⁴⁸ Whitefield's great work will be in the New World, beginning at the place, Savannah, and upon the foundations Wesley laid. Wesley's great work will be done in the Old World, beginning at the place, London, and on the foundations laid by Whitefield. During the night of January 31, 1738, somewhere in the English Channel, the ship returning John Wesley to England and that taking George Whitefield to Georgia passed each other, neither man knowing the other's presence.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1735, Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Queen's College, Oxford, Mr. Charles Delamotte, son of a merchant in London, who had offered himself some days before, my brother Charles Wesley, and myself, took a boat for Gravesend, in order to embark for Georgia. Our end in leaving our native country was not to avoid want (God having given us plenty of temporal blessings) but singly this, to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God. In the afternoon we found the Simmonds off Gravesend, and immediately went aboard."¹ So reads the first paragraph of "The Voyage," the first section of his *Journal*, the extract of his *Diaries*. So begins the account of his "new era." New era it is, and will be for America, for England, for the world; and, for the present, especially for John Wesley's quest.

Certain background items should be presented here as related to the voyage.

1. The ships. The Trustees chartered two: the *Simmonds* and the *London Merchant*, the first captained by Joseph Cornish; the second, by Captain Thomas. To convoy these and to survey the coasts and harbors about Savannah, the Admiralty sent H. M. sloop *Hawk*, under Captain Gascoigne. Of the whole, General Oglethorpe was in charge.²

2. The time. The missionary party boarded the *Simmonds* at Gravesend "about four in the afternoon," on October 14th. The ship lay at Gravesend for a week, due to calm weather. On Tuesday, the 21st, a "fair wind" arose and the ship sailed through the Strait of Dover and into the English Channel. Friday, the 24th, a rolling sea made most seasick, but John was not "disordered at all." Ten days, the ships lay in the Downs awaiting a fair wind. Friday, the 31st, it came and the expedition reached the Isle of Wight, at Cowes, on November 1st. On the 19th, the *Hawk* joined them there. Storms held them here until December 10th, when at eight A.M. they sailed.³ The next four days found them in the Bay of Biscay, where the sea was "very rough."

Thence, they headed out to sea. Wednesday, February 4, 1736, soundings were possible. By noon, trees were visible from the mast. Thursday, the fifth, "between two and three in the afternoon . . . we cast anchor near Tybee Island, which gave us a specimen of America. The pines, palms, and cedars, running in rows along the shore, made an exceeding beautiful prospect, especially to us who did not expect to see the bloom of spring in the depth of winter. The clearness of the sky, the setting sun, the smoothness of the water conspired to recommend this new world and prevent our regretting the loss of our native country."

3. The people. The narrative of the voyage and also that of the Wesley stay in Georgia become crowded now with human ways, moods, foibles, schemes, passions, hopes, fears, weaknesses, aspirations and sublimities. Over and under decks, in and out of cabins, these swirl like a storm at whose vortex much of the time stands John Wesley. Such abundance of human color tempts strongly to tarry with many incidents. However, as many of the particular persons must appear, it is needed now to record that the *Simmonds* carried 106 persons, of whom eighty were English and twenty-six, German. Between them were wide differences. In a considerably modified fashion of a ship's log, we will follow John Wesley.

Adverse judgment has born down hard, sweepingly and unjustly upon Wesley and his ways in this voyage to Georgia and in his stay there.

To avoid this, one should keep well in mind the following points:

While the four were walking in the Isle of Wight, on November 3rd, they entered into a compact. It is likely that, as they walked, they discussed the work ahead. They became "fully convinced that it is impossible, either to promote the work of God among the heathen, without an entire union among themselves, or that such a union should subsist, unless each one will give up his single judgment to that of the majority." They agree "by the help of God: first, that none of us will undertake anything of importance without first proposing it to the other three; secondly, that whenever our judgments differ any one shall give up his single judgment or inclination to the others; thirdly, that in case of an equality, after begging God's direction, the matter shall be decided by lot."⁴ In this, it is easy and correct to see John Wesley's administrative hand. Equally facile is it to conclude he would rule the group, overrule them or move without them. It is true he had a great capacity for wise,

effective management. Nothing is more true in all his life than that he consulted others, at times in situations not properly requiring it at all.

Next, true and just judgment can be made by recalling Wesley's Oxford practices, by remembering he is amid, and at times submerged in, a deep personal quest, by keeping in mind the sponsoring Society's aims (his faithfulness to them was but sound honesty and relieves him of responsibility in some cases),⁵ and by remembering Wesley was now branching out in an area new in geographic situation, new in the life of the Church of England, and new in its general personnel.

Finally, anyone judging should ascertain the facts of any particular situation. The abundance of Wesley's writings affords sources for this. Its wide range of activities hides the truth from mere smatterers. His is a life vast in design and of necessity involved in detail. Quick grabbers readily become garbage gatherers. Well does Curnock warn: "The daily and hourly record of Wesley's life at this time is, for the most part, a wearisome reiteration, as the record of every life subjected to rigid rules often must be. But the very monotony, the printed details of which irritate, is of the essence of the story. We cannot fully understand what has already happened, still less shall we be in position to appraise at its true value all that is going to happen, unless a vivid consciousness of Wesley's bondage during many years to the monotony of life-by-method impresses us. Nor can we hope to realize what it actually was, or the effect it had upon him and upon his people, except we read it upon the printed page in reiterated sequences."⁶

Friday, October 17th, was one of wide significance. Rising at 5:30, John's *Diary* next records these pursuits: "Prayed with Charles and Ingham. 6. talked of disposing our business and studies." Here is the genesis of their routine. Business refers to their religious serving. Studies, as far as John was concerned, included this, "German 2¾." His *Journal* thus expands it: "I began to learn German, in order to converse with the Moravians." The figures indicate that from soon after noon until 2:45, he studied German. His teacher was Ambrosius Tackner.

Before this study began, there occurred but was little noted a contact of the highest positive significance in Wesley's quest: that is, his noticing the Moravians. Sometime during the previous three days, he had been impressed by these fellow passengers. With what in them he was smitten, he does not say; but it was most likely their character, which Ingham records thus: they were "men who have left all for their Master,

and who have indeed learned of Him, being meek and lowly, dead to the world, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Wesley's recognition of that something about them, different and higher and real, determined him to inquire into it. Doing so required a knowledge of German, and he had made arrangements to begin its study on the 17th, Ambrosius Tackner agreeing to teach him. Thus, void of any fanfare, there come together John Wesley, Seeker, and that people who, under the grace of God, will be Christ's evangelists to John Wesley. The Lord is never late! Before Wesley's New Era is three days old, He is the first to lay hold of the one He seeks!

The student of German shows this same afternoon something of his own religious temper. His *Diary* continues: "5. conversed with Ambrosius Tackner; 6. he resolved to be baptized." The next day, it was done. Ingham adds: "He had received only lay baptism before." Wesley's High Church tenets show themselves.⁷ In an hour's conversation, Wesley had brought his teacher of German to see the invalidity of lay baptism and to accept re-baptism by an ordained clergyman.

The following day, Sunday, he did a semi-High Church thing. "The morning being fair and calm, we had the morning service on quarter-deck. I now first preached extempore. . . ." Preaching in the open air was hardly a disregard of High Church ways, since they were aboard ship. This is the first time he did so. Later, his reluctant resort to it, and then his necessary and common use of it, will be a point of heavy criticism of him. Preaching extempore is a new variation. Both exemplify what he wrote his mother early this year about Christian liberty.

Monday the 20th, diet and religion join. The Brothers, believing that denying themselves might be helpful by the blessing of God "wholly left off the use of flesh and wine," limiting themselves to a vegetarian diet mostly of rice and biscuit. This same day, David Nitschmann, Bishop of the Moravian Church since last March, Hermsdorf, an officer allowed by the Prussian Government to serve under Oglethorpe, and Andrew Dober began to learn English.

Tuesday, October 21st, the *Simmonds* began her journey, and the Wesley quartet "began to be a little regular," as John stated it, by adopting a daily schedule:

- Morning: 4-5 "Each of us used private prayer."
- 5-7 Bible study together.
- 7 Breakfast.

- 8 Public prayers.
- 9-12 John studied German.
Delmotte studied Greek.
Charles "writ sermons."
Ingham "instructed the children."
- Afternoon: 12 Reported, each to all, on the morning's work.
- 1 Dined.
- 2-4 Reading or speaking to such of the passengers
each had in charge.
- 4 Evening prayers. Second lesson explained or
public catechizing or instructing of the children.
- 5-6 Private prayer.
- 6-7 Each, in his cabin, read to a few persons.
- 7 John "joined with the Germans in their public
service."
- 8 The four met for exhortation and instruction.
- 9-10 "We went to bed."

The characterizing of such an eighteen-hour program as the mere beginning of being a "little regular" could be understood by some as the caustic wit of a cynic; by others, as the unsparing stricture of the finished ascetic. There surely is truth in Fitchett's estimate: "The ascetic, not to say the monk was emerging once more in Wesley's life! . . . The ship that carried these strange missionaries was turned into a floating monastery."⁸

'Tis true these four were a heightened Holy Club transferred from Oxford to the *Simmonds*, from campus to the ocean. Along with this fact are other facts. They were chosen, largely, because of the conduct and spirit they exemplified as the Holy Club. Their present mission they estimated rightly, in its newness, size, and nature, would require properly a greater degree of devotion. Their present conditions allowed them a more full and more closely articulated regime. Their sense of mission, though colored considerably by an unrealistic rosiness, was yet practical enough to beget greater assiduity in personal religious culture and conduct. Judged by the greater prevalence of its opposite, it is much to the credit of the insight and initiative of this quartet that their care for spiritual culture should extend aggressively to their fellow voyagers. Such extension of concern to others is the second and inherent part of the Gospel of Christ. The Holy Club had done so at Oxford. It is now

done on the ship. It will be an enduring and cardinal *sine qua non* in Wesleyan Methodism. Without it, any claimed Christian Faith is halved. Certainly, modern Western Christianity, which posits most all of the faith in outreach to "others," has no ground for criticism of these young men.

Some points in the schedule call for notice. Apropos of the above paragraph, it is to be stressed that the public services were but two a day: at 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. The Moravian service at 7 P.M. was public; but, since only John Wesley of the four attended it, there is little likelihood any of the others did. To achieve a better understanding of the language was part of his reason but something far deeper was his major purpose. Their singing thrilled him, as later it would capture the Georgia Indians. Upon his flute,⁹ he will rehearse their hymns, translating some and using them in his later and Georgia-published hymnals. (Naturally, the narrow compass of the ship allowed the voice to be heard throughout the ship, disturbing all unwilling to hear.)¹⁰

Thrice a day, from 2 to 4, 6 to 7, and at 7 P.M., they made themselves available to the other voyagers—a service not imposed but voluntary. Such services comprised readings to persons and groups, besides personal conferences with individuals. John's *Diary* for October 17–19 lists these: conversed with Ambrose Tackner; Moravian, in talk 8½; read with Tackner; conversed with Mrs. Tackner; 7¼ conversed with Oglethorpe; and 8 "sat in"¹¹ with Oglethorpe.

"Writ sermons" recalls the reluctant acceptance of ordination by Charles Wesley and its requirement of preaching. Expecting only to spend his life at Oxford as a teacher, he had no preparation for preaching but now must be ready. Whitehead says, while the *Simmonds* was detained at Cowes, he "preached several times" and "great crowds" attended.

The instructing of children is an Oxford Holy Club practice instituted aboard the *Simmonds*. Wesley's use of it in Savannah will compose what some regard as the first Sunday school.

Throughout the voyage, Wesley's quest includes books. The Society had taken care to have an ample and varied supply of religious books for the use and distribution of the quartet.

Kempis' *Christian Pattern* is still in use. This same year, Wesley's "extract"¹² from it was published. Having become a missionary, he began reading the life of one of two hundred years ago—Xavier, who

labored in India, Japan and China.¹³ His quest led him to study the life of Gregory Lopez, whose asceticism appealed to Wesley at this time but not for long. Yet Lopez's uninterrupted communion with God will keep for this Spanish saint a warm place in Wesley's heart all his life.¹⁴

October 27th, the *Diary* has the record, "Began *Gesang-Buch*." Four days ago, having begun its study on the 17th, he finished the German grammar. He will continue its study by adding now reading German literature, the first book of which is the Moravian hymnal. This could have been the first German Moravian hymn book, published in 1735. Its title was *Das Gesang-Buch der Gemeine in Herrnhut*, "The Song-Book of the Congregation in Herrnhut."

Here again a matter of the widest significance begins. Curnock's estimate of it is: "The beginning of a revolution in Christian song."¹⁵ The reach and depth and height of it might have escaped even John Wesley at the time; for his *Diary* records only the other facts of the rolling of the sea as he read his Bible from four to five A.M.—"Mr. Johnson's anger at our having prayers," and his talking with Oglethorpe and finding him "right"—that is, religiously. It is not required here to discuss the impact of this study of a German hymn book upon general hymnody, but it is necessary to relate it to the quest of Wesley.

In Georgia, on May 5, 1736, he began translating some of these hymns for the first hymn book he published, his *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, published in Charleston, South Carolina, later this year.¹⁶ Notice two of his translations. As given in *Hymns in the Use of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, of 1849, they are:

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain:
The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away.

Father, thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far:
Thy heart still melts with tenderness;
Thine arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste, and live.

O love, thou bottomless abyss!
My sins are swallow'd up in thee;
Cover'd is my unrighteousness,
Nor spot of guilt remains on me:
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

By faith I plunge me in this sea:
Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;
Hither, when hell assails, I flee;
I look into my Saviour's breast:
Away, sad doubt and anxious fear!
Mercy is all that's written there.¹⁷

The other reads:

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
O knit my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there:
Thine wholly, thine alone, I am;
Be Thou alone my constant flame.

O grant that nothing in Thy soul
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone:
O may Thy love possess me whole—
My joy, my treasure, and my crown:
Strange flames far from my heart remove;
My every act, word, thought be love.

Unwearied may I this pursue;
Dauntless to the high prize aspire;
Hourly within, my soul renew
This holy flame, this heavenly fire:
And day and night, be all my care
To guard the sacred treasure there.

In suff'ring be Thy love my peace;
In weakness be Thy love my power;

And when the storms of life shall cease,
Jesus, in that important hour,
In death as life be Thou my guide,
And save me, who for me hast died.¹⁸

Keeping in mind the fact and present status of John Wesley's quest as one reads these grand hymns, one is inclined strongly to believe that John felt, while he heard them, a power in them. It is very probable that he studied hard his German grammar to enable himself to lay hold of the content of these hymns. Later, he will read German books upon other subjects but, first, he addresses himself to the *Gesang-Buch*! It is easy to see why he was so vigorous in acquiring the key to these treasures.

The second hymn is "one of the finest of all hymns on the love of Christ and has had wide circulation through many denominational books."¹⁹ Its themes are the love of Christ for a man, one man—Paul Gerhardt and that man's estimate of it; and his longing to return it. So felt the author. How much of the author's feeling came to this reader of his hymn cannot be said accurately. What can be said is: undoubtedly, it impressed Wesley greatly now; its effect upon him during his Georgia stay will wax; its second stanza was the "cry of his heart,"²⁰ as not a finder but still a seeker, when he returned to England in 1738; and love of God will become, through all his active life, the indispensable first and greater part of his doctrine of Christian perfection.

With the grand Gospel, quite comprehensive, of the other hymn, he was unfamiliar. That adjective might be kind. In view of his sermon of near two years ago on "Circumcision of the Heart," it seems his silence about this hymn discloses a wonder or, perhaps, a latent opposition. Yet as a seeker, it is the message of this hymn which he most imperatively needs. Love, grace, mercy, faith, the sacrificial atonement of Christ—all are there. It might be these vast things of the wisdom and power of God his "scanty thought surpassed far." At least he cannot say, "Now I have found the ground. . . ." He could have been "not far from the kingdom of heaven."

Among books, he read: Whiston's *Catechism*; the mystic *Theologia Germanica* of Jacob Böhme; one on *Christian Prudence*; August Franke's *Pietas Hallensis*, and *Nicodemus*, or *Treatise on the Fear of Man*; Robert Nelson's *Festivals and Fasts*; John Johnson's *The Unbloody Sacrifice*, and *Altar Unveiled and Supported*; Hicke's *Reformed Devotions*; and

(one of unusual importance) Dr. Daniel Brevint's *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*.²¹

His major Bible study was the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. These studies were the foundation of his thirteen sermons upon the three chapters.²²

October 31st occurs this: "At eleven at night I was waked by a great noise. I soon found there was no danger. But the bare apprehension of it gave me a lively conviction what manner of men ought those to be who are every moment on the brink of eternity." The fear of a landsman out at night upon vast waters in a new conveyance might be understood in this, were it not the fact that some time ago, he has begun to be moved by thoughts of death. Curnock observes: "Alarmed by the great noise in the night, he renews his resolutions."

Tuesday, November 4th, having done the same on the 3rd for the *London Merchant*, he drew up for the *Simmonds* a list of names, "probably of communicants and of those needing pastoral care." Communicants were few thus far. Sunday, October 19th, there were three besides the Wesley quartet. This day, he formally began visiting people, what in Methodism came to be termed visiting "from house to house."²³ John has become now substantially a vicar, chief minister of a parish which, along with Georgia, will be the only such relation he will ever have.

Noteworthy is it that the first names on his list were "Hird and family." It was composed of Thomas the father, Grace the mother, Mark (aged 21) and Phoebe (aged "about seventeen"), the children.²⁴ They were Quakers but will be baptized by John Wesley on the *Simmonds* on the coming November 16th.²⁵ Curnock notes: "They deserve to stand first on the roll of Colonial or American Methodism." Through thick and thin, they were loyal to the Wesleys.²⁶

The public items in the quartet's schedule aroused opposition by November 17th, because there had been added to the second lesson in the afternoon an after-service exposition of the *Book of Common Prayer*; and "some of the people were tired of so much expounding," John records. He continues: "We proposed to them fairly to leave it off"—that is, omit it altogether. This "they utterly protested against, and desired us to go on as we began. . . ." It is likely that the objectors were the fewer.

A phase of the quest appears again on November 23rd. "At night

I was awakened by the tossing of the ship and roaring of the wind, and plainly showed I was unfit, for I was unwilling, to die."

To date, there are three references to death's illumination of his spiritual status. The first had to do with the prospect of it, which revealed to him what he did not have: no sense of comfort during such prospect and after it no sense of acceptance with God. The next confrontation by it, three weeks ago, is positive in a general way: he saw "in a lively sense," is "convinced," what kind of a man he who is about to die ought to be. Now, he is convinced—"plainly showed" by the disturbed sea's disturbing the *Simmonds*—that he is unwilling to die. Such an attitude he interprets as meaning he is not the "kind" of man he ought to be. He is "unfit" for death. The clear inference at least, if not deduction, from this is that the something he seeks must make him not only ready but also willing to die. He has now nothing which gives him any whit of victory over man's "last enemy"²⁷—death. However, it is very likely he knows he must have this death-o'ercoming something and, too, can have it. The Bible's, his own, and also Methodism's stress upon personal experience of inner testimony, willingly or not, appears here.

Nothing he has done hitherto has yielded him that something. A résumé of this Sunday, November 23rd, is a sample. He arises with a cold. He reads a devotional book, *Hickes's Reformed Devotions*, which appealed to him so mightily that for a time it was well-nigh a substitute for *Kempis* and the *Psalms*. He talked and sang with *Delamotte*. At 8 o'clock, robed in a surplice, he conducted the early service; then conversed seriously with three of his young people—*Mark* and *Phoebe Hird* and *Betty Hazle*. In the 11 o'clock service, he intoned. At the Eucharist, there were twelve—the quartet, the four *Hirds*, *Mr. Tackner*, *Betty* his wife, *Mr. Burk* and *Mr. West*—"all converts to his ministry." *Curnock* concluded: "It was a morning of triumph . . . followed, however, by trouble and humiliation. At one he 'fell' on his 'head'; *Oglethorpe* was 'very ill' and asked John to visit him; and a storm filled him with a terror of death of which he was ashamed."²⁸ That is: none of the works of the day or the sum of them allayed even, much less o'ercame the night's unwillingness or unfitness to die.

The story of the open-sea voyage of fifty-two days of mid-winter involves some of the life of both crew and passengers, and also, the items related to Wesley's quest. Some of the crew and passenger incidents are these:

Mrs. Welch, aged twenty-six and far on in pregnancy, was "apparently dying."

By December 14th, John had ceased study of German, because of the press of other work, chiefly pastoral visiting. His visiting included General Oglethorpe, whose present religious state Wesley epitomizes thus: "Quite open, but deferred communion." By the first term, he meant that frank religious talk was acceptable. The phrase is an illustration of John's closely uniting religion and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The next day, the 15th, there broke into the open some dissension amongst the quartet: they were "all angry." Foremost in it were Delamotte and another of the four, John Wesley most likely. Curnock suspects the cause was John's unbending maintenance of his religious routine: "And no relief is permitted," he writes. "There is no trace of recreation, or even of changed occupation, breaking the monotony of this exalted and unhuman rule of holy living." Having recorded this worthy outburst, the day's *Diary* ended with this: "Storm. Quite well. Slept sound!" He is referring to a sea storm and his own reaction thereto: the parallel to the inter-quartet tumult is patent.

Tuesday, the 16th, a sea storm precluded the public worship. John kept to his quarters from nine to twelve, writing on the Lord's Supper.

That Sacrament was the dominant feature of the 18th. Mrs. Welch was in a high fever, and was believed to be near death. Pertinent thereto, Wesley's record reads: "She earnestly desired to receive the holy communion. . . . At the hour of her receiving, she began to recover, and in a few days was entirely out of danger."

Sunday, December 21st, was Oglethorpe's thirty-ninth birthday. John did not mention it, but Ingham's *Journal* says it was a day of calm sea; and the General celebrated by giving the passengers a sheep and wine.

Christmas Day was observed similarly: Oglethorpe gave the people a hog and wine. Religious observance consisted of John's reading prayers, preaching and administering communion to nineteen people. One wonders what the sermon was and how the Moravians observed the day. Wesley surely appears to have been dull enough. An inkling at least of his temper is gotten from these contemporary facts: the dissension amongst the quartet; the sea storm, the first on the open sea; Oglethorpe's calling Wesley alone to his cabin for some interview (over the quartet's anger and John's rigid schedule?); John's being sleepy on the 19th—something unusual for him; and perhaps his dislike of the two days of wining and dining, when only two weeks ago, on the 7th, he

and the three others "agreed to leave off suppers." These experiences crowded into ten days jarred John Wesley. For how long and how far they did so is not stated; but, at least, it is clear his words, "Quite well. Slept sound!" had fairly violent variations.

New Year's Day, January 1, 1736, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated but only fifteen participated. Benjamin Ingham ejaculated, "O may the New Year bring a new heart and a new life to all those who seek the Lord God of their fathers!" The aspiration is excellent. Its junction with a day appears to be an expectation of salvation by calendar.

Friday, January 9th, the American Indians receive attention from John and Ingham: this day they began compiling a dictionary of their language. On this and subsequent evenings, when the ship's rolling precluded visitations, these two interviewed Oglethorpe, learning "many particulars" about Indian life. There was time for this, as contrary winds delayed them for two weeks.

A colorful incident of the voyage occurred on the 14th. Wesley's account is: "Mr. Oglethorpe taking up Gother's *Sinner's Complaint to God*, alighted upon a part of it which relates to forgiveness. We then put him in mind of one of his servants, who had injured him sometime before. He forgave him from that hour."²⁹

This refers to what Bishop Hurst regarded as one of the "suggestive incidents" of the voyage. One day, John Wesley heard the General vigorously scolding in his cabin. Entering, he found him in a fury over his Italian servant Grimaldi, who was trembling before him. "Noticing Wesley, Oglethorpe exclaimed, 'You must excuse me, Mr. Wesley, I have met with a provocation too great to bear. This villain, Grimaldi, has drunk nearly the whole of my Cyprus wine, the only wine that agrees with me. But I am determined to be revenged. I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot and to be carried to the man-of-war which sails with us. The rascal should have taken care how he used me so, for I never forgive.' Wesley replied. 'Then, I hope sir, you never sin.' Accepting the reproof, the General drew a bunch of keys from his pocket, giving them to Grimaldi and saying, 'There, villain, take my keys, and behave better for the future.'"³⁰

Twenty-one-year-old Alexander Grimaldi was not the only one who purloined. Thursday, January 15th, complaint was made to Oglethorpe of the "unequal distribution of water among the passengers." His putting other persons in charge of it resulted in this: "The old ones and their friends were highly exasperated at us, to whom they imputed the change." The "us" means John and the three others of the quartet. Cur-

nock states John's *Diary* "shows it was Wesley who 'inquired' into the matter of water supply and who informed Oglethorpe."³¹

This same day, John's personal regime suffered two alterations or lapses. The one is his sleeping until 5:30 A.M.! The other is, "at eight he had 'raisins.'" Curnock comments: Wesley was fond of raisins, at Oxford often buying them. This indulgence, "however simple, is one of the rarities of this voyage *Diary*." That dissension which occurred amongst the four friends on December 15th is overcome on this 15th of January.

During these days, his "special work" was the writing of a *Catechism for Children*. He is reading much in the *Theologica Germanica* of Jacob Böhme, the mystic, and instead of the *Prayer Book* probably read some of it to the people in the afternoon exposition period.

Friday, 16th, in the morning he spent four hours sorting the many books in his care. This day, with arrival at Georgia in mind, Oglethorpe read, most likely to the people, the Colony's Charter. Another indication of general anticipation of the end of the voyage is the writing of accounts of it. Wesley began his on January 19th and might have completed it. On the 23rd, he saw that of Von Reck, one of the Germans aboard, and began transcribing his own.

Such were some of the happenings of the voyage. Return now to the beginning of the open-sea part of the voyage and, during the same time covered by these events, follow specifically the course of John Wesley's religious quest.

December 7th, this item appears: the decision of the quartet to "leave off suppers"—an extension of fasting. Later, the two Wesleys abandoned this, but Ingham adhered to it.³²

Two days later, at the foot of the page of his *Diary* for that day, he added this note: "N.B.—No Hourly Prayer like Ejaculations!"³³ Of this pious or devotional practice, Curnock observes: "In the eighteenth century the habit of devout ejaculations was common among English mystics. Books of pious ejaculations were published." Doubtless, John became acquainted with the practice through Jeremy Taylor's books, where are given fifty-seven of them: eleven, in connection with the subject of the practice of the presence of God; and forty-six in relation to sickness.³⁴ These are short prayers, composed mostly of short selections of Scripture. His *Diary's* references to them are by the letter E to Ej followed by a time-numeral, such as 5, 6, 7, which tell the time each occurred. On December 10th, the day they sailed past the treacherous rocks of the Needles, he resorted to ejaculation fourteen times from

4 A.M. to 6 P.M. Such a practice is more like unto the whirling of a prayer wheel than the filial, trusting simplicity of the Lord's Prayer.

The day after Christmas, he records his religious status as "lukewarm." Contributory to this was the fraying temper of the shipmates: two months at sea, delay, adverse winds, confinement and crowded quarters, Christmas food and drink, upon whose exuberance Wesley undoubtedly frowned, adding irritation—all these combined to bring John low. For some change and perhaps consolation, he, after a lapse of twelve days, resumes his study of German.

The year ends in discouraging fashion. He doggedly keeps to study of German, turning to it thrice. Otherwise, he is embroiled in an exasperating dissension between two women passengers, Mrs. Lawley and Mrs. Hawkins. The latter was the wife of the "ship's surgeon" and was a "gay young woman." She and Mrs. Lawley had been somewhat friendly. On November 28th, John found them together in the latter's cabin and read Law's *Serious Call* to them, as he did later. Mrs. Hawkins was "always attentive and often much amazed." During December, the two women had a "sharp quarrel," Mrs. Lawley being joined therein by Mrs. Moore. These two were supported by their husbands, the four becoming so enraged at John that they determined "never to be at prayers any more." Two days after Christmas, he attempted a reconciliation of the two dissidents with Mrs. Hawkins but failed. December 30th, he learned Mrs. Hawkins was ill; thought she might be "in a milder temper"; and "spent some time with her," apparently blaming her dislike of him upon her association with Mrs. Moore. No sooner than he had left than she told others "all and more than all John had said. The result was enhanced opposition to Wesley. Little is the wonder, then, that his spiritual state was still "lukewarm."

January 5th, at night a sea squall both awoke and terrified him by its making him face death.

Five days later, another religious storm arose aboard ship and centered about Mrs. Hawkins. During the recent quarrel, John seems to have sided with her, at the least, or defended her. Charles Wesley and Benjamin Ingham regarded Mrs. Hawkins as insincere and, on the evening of the 10th, were angry at John for his favoring her. When, on the 12th, she desired to receive communion, Charles and Ingham were joined by Bishop Nitschmann, Brownfield, Horton, Delamotte.

That evening, John told her of the charges against her. "She replied," he wrote, "clearly and calmly to every article of the charge, and with such an appearance of innocence as to most particulars, and of an

entire change of the rest, that I could no longer doubt of her sincere desire to be not only almost but altogether a Christian." On the evening of the 13th, John and Charles threshed the matter over from 4:45 until 7 o'clock: after evening prayers, they resumed the subject but came to no agreement." The ensuing Sunday, Mrs. Hawkins was allowed to commune.

Upon Wesley's being "blindly and daringly charitable enough" to treat Mrs. Hawkins thus, Curnock comments: "In him is the quality that helped to make him the greatest evangelist of his times; in them the underlying quality that drove Ingham and Delamotte away from him and often set up partial estrangements between himself and Charles." Herein, John Wesley displays great courage, independence and trust. Whatever doubt he might have had, he yet strode, or faced, towards the best. It is well to remember: the laborer objecting to his employee's generosity, the man at the wedding feast without a wedding garment, and the disciple of the betrayal kiss—each one, Jesus addressed as "Friend."³⁵

Here again appears an instance of the Divine Hand in the life of John Wesley. Amidst the mass of deceit, criticism, opposition and hatred about him, and of seeming futility in the unsatisfied quest of a something unknown within him, he was held up to, and held himself to, that unknown. The *Simmonds*, through calm, adverse winds, rolling and stormy sea, kept her course: so, too, did John Wesley keep his. This fidelity is the most significant power in his quest.

Saturday, January 17th, his *Journal* has this record: "Many people were very impatient at the contrary wind. At seven in the evening they were quieted by a storm. It rose higher and higher till nine. About nine the sea broke over us from stem to stern; burst through the windows of the state cabin, Mr. Oglethorpe's cabin, where three or four of us were sitting with a sick woman, and covered her all over. A bureau sheltered me from the main shock. Mr. Oglethorpe removed Mrs. Welsh once more into his own bed. About eleven I lay down in the great cabin, and in a short time fell asleep, though very uncertain whether I should wake alive, and much ashamed of my unwillingness to die. O how pure in heart must he be who would rejoice to appear before God at a moment's warning! Toward morning, 'He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.'"

Again does death illuminate John Wesley's understanding of what a real Christian should be. He should be both willing and ready to die at a moment's notice: more, he should "rejoice to appear before God."

That rejoicing should be his. However, he could not rejoice; nor was he willing or ready. He was unwilling, and thereat was ashamed. The willingness, readiness and rejoicing could come, he seems sure, from purity of heart. He does not specify what this purity is, but clearly evident is this much: it was something inner, in one's spirit; and it was a quality of that spirit—cleanness, holiness. He has naught to say of any means by which he can purify himself or can be made pure by another. His judgment, therefore, of such means as he has been employing is: they were incompetent for producing that purity. Whether or not he realized at the time the full impact of this self-judgment, we cannot say. If he did not so, the mere arrival at such verbal judgment was a move forward. What his on-the-spot move was, written at one o'clock in the afternoon in "handwriting which betrays the shaking of the ship," was this: "Calmer. Resolved not to please myself in eating or drinking. Thankfulness with our Resolution."³⁶

Sunday's *Journal* entry adds another effect of the storm upon Wesley's quest and his future work. It was his alteration of his estimate of the place and power of fear in the Christian faith. "Sun. 18— We returned God thanks for our deliverance, of which a few appeared duly sensible. But the rest (among whom were most of the sailors) denied we had been in any danger. I could not have believed that so little good would have been done by the terror they were in before. But, for the future, I will never believe them to obey from fear who are dead to the motive of love."

Curnock terms this a "resolution." It is more exactly an observation; but, since Wesley's lifelong pattern was understanding and then resolution or action, Curnock is close to the truth. His evaluation of John's reaction to this storm reads: "Atlantic storms and their evanescent effect upon himself and his godless fellow passengers cured him of any faith he may hitherto have cherished in the sovereign, saving grace of fear."³⁷

Storms at sea dominate the voyage henceforth. That of the 17th was followed by another on the 23rd. "In the evening another storm began. In the morning it increased so that they were forced to let the ship drive. I could not but say to myself, 'How is it that thou hast no faith?' being still unwilling to die." Again, imminent death drove him to self-inquisition. Whatever his change of mind about fear as a motive might have meant to him during the past six days, it has not affected his unwillingness to die. The difference now is in his allocation of the cause of his reluctance: then it was inner impurity; now it is lack of any faith. He has no idea that effective faith has any particular and essential refer-

ence, such as a repentant sinner's directing faith to the atoning death of Christ—the only reference of faith a sinner can make. He seems to assume that whatever he had hitherto taken to be faith, really was faith and really was possessed by him. This second storm has evicted that assurance and replaced it with a question. Having taken faith as adequate, and having found it utterly inadequate, he tacitly concludes he had no faith at all and openly inquires how he has been divested of any faith. Question, he can ask: answer, he has none. His *Friday Journal* ends thus: "About mid-night the storm ceased." True of the ocean, but not of John's soul, this was.

Saturday, another storm came. It began at 4:30 A.M. It waxed into a climax by 11 A.M. At 2 P.M., it "rather abated." His feeling during it was "11. Prayed. Storm greater: Afraid!" His renunciation of fear as a motive has not overcome fear as a response to evident danger.

January 25th, Sunday, broke the worst of these five storms, but the one in which, during Wesley's quest, his greatest aid arrived. His account of this most noted storm must be given as he wrote it.

"While the calm continued I endeavoured to prepare myself for another storm. At noon our third storm began.³⁸ At four it was more violent than any we had had before. Now, indeed, we could say, 'The waves of the sea were mighty, and raged horribly. They rose up to the heavens above, and dove down to hell beneath.' The winds roared round about us, and—what I never heard before—whistled as distinctly as if it had been a human voice. The ship not only rocked to and fro with the utmost violence, but shook and jarred with so unequal, grating a motion, that one could not but with great difficulty keep one's hold of anything, nor stand a moment without it. Every ten minutes came a shock against the stern or side of the ship, which one would think should dash the planks in a thousand pieces. In the height of the storm, a child, privately baptized before, was brought to be publicly received into the Church. It put me in mind of Jeremiah's buying a field³⁹ when the Chaldeans were on the point of destroying Jerusalem, and seemed a pledge of the mercy God designed to show us, even in the land of the living.

"We spent two or three hours after prayers with Mr. Oglethorpe in conversing suitably to the occasion, confirming one another in a calm submission to the wise, holy, gracious will of God. And now a storm did not appear so terrible as before. Blessed be the God of all consolation, who alone doeth wonders, and is able mightily to deliver His people!

"At seven I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behaviour. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying, 'It was good for their proud heart,' and 'Their loving Saviour had done more for them.' And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, wherein we were mentioning the power of God, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans looked up, and without intermission calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterwards, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No; our women and children are not afraid to die.'

"From them I went to their crying, trembling neighbours and found myself enabled to speak with them in boldness and to point out to them the difference in the hour of trial between him that feareth God and him that feareth Him not. At twelve the wind fell. This was the most glorious day which I have hitherto seen."

The relation of this storm to Wesley's quest is seen through the responses to it of three groups. The unusual severity of the storm brought all aboard face to face with death. How the crew felt about it, John does not say: but Benjamin Ingham says that, during the storm of the 17th, most of them were "cowards." One of the three groups Wesley definitely mentions was the English passengers, among whom there was a "terrible screaming." Next was the small group in Oglethorpe's cabin, comprising the four young men and the General. Closed away from the others, these spent several hours in talking over their situation. The drift of it was their encouraging each other to submit calmly to imminent death as the "wise, holy, gracious will of God." In this long detachment, there is something unusual: here are four men, young; definitely committed to a religious ministry, two of them ordained; and the head of the entire venture—all closeted away from their fellow venturers, giving none of their conversation "suitably to

the occasion" to any others. The best one can judge of them is that the cumulative effects of the voyage, this climax of the most severe of all the encountered storms and the pressing concerns of their own deaths, combined to drive each to attend to the disposition in eternity of his own soul. This is not selfish disregard for others but obedience to the solemn and inseparable duty of attending to one's own soul. Upon the cross, even the Lord did that.

It is to the credit of Wesley that apparently he was the first of the cabin five to contact any others. His heavy ship visitations even he had omitted for hours, but at length that practice along with his custom of attending the 7 P.M. Moravian service drew him to their quarters.

His main reason for going thither now was this: all during the voyage, he had observed closely the truly Christian humility, serving, cheek-turning and deep and vital piety of these Moravians. In his judgment, they had passed his tests of Christian practice. He has been troubled deeply during these recent storms about his unwillingness to die. Certainly, this worst storm made that fear of death more acute than ever. Hence, quest for adequate help became a concern of greatest moment. As he with the others sat together in the afternoon, the heaving, the screams of the English passengers could not help but only exacerbate his dread. Their conversing conduced to "calm submission" to God's will but yielded no willingness, much less any conquest of fear or victory over dying or rejoicing in the prospect of heaven.

Questing as he has been and now is, he thinks of the response the Moravians might be making to death. "There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear. . . ." Notice there is about this the hard, cold, detached, objective, intellectual approach of a scientist. Throughout John Wesley's life, this approach to matters of the deepest import characterized him. The gentlest of men, he upon proper occasion could be as cold as ice and as hard as steel. In him, this was never a total or a dominant trait. It was a ruthless examination of a given something, previous to an estimate, approval or disapproval of such thing. All who regard John Wesley as a mere enthusiast should note well this phase of his personality, his training, his life and his work.⁴⁰ In this spirit and for this purpose he went to the Moravian meeting.

As usual, it began with a psalm. Amidst this, the storm well-nigh swamped the ship. The singers merely raised their eyes and, without dropping a word, "calmly sung on." One's imagination attempts to picture the face of Wesley, as about him those earnest, godly folks—men,

women, and even the children—sang without break, tear or fear. As though unable to believe his eyes, John questioned one as to his and his fellows' fear, hearing these testimonies: "I thank God, no," and, "Our women and children are not afraid to die."

Wesley's estimate of the value to him of the Moravian demonstration of complete fearlessness before death was: "This was the most glorious day which I have hitherto seen." He now knows that fear of death can be overcome; can be overcome joyously. Curnock outdoes Wesley: "The student who traces the sequence of events will see that the storm was one of the crucial facts in the history of early Methodism. It shook the nerve of all on board, passengers and seamen—of all except the Moravians. It was their great peacefulness when the sea split the main-sail, and the joy of their singing, that brought Wesley's incipient friendship to maturity."⁴¹

Thursday, January 29th, the *Journal* reads: "About seven in the evening we fell in with the skirts of a hurricane." Rain, wind and lightning were "extremely violent." Being below with the Moravians, John "knew nothing of the danger."

Friday, January 30th, John's *Journal* reads: "We had another storm which did us no other harm than splitting the foresail. Our bed being wet, I laid me down on the floor and slept sound till morning. And I believe I shall not find it needful to go to bed, as it is called, any more." That this was not mere vaunting, his Georgia residence and later life will instance amply.

Sunday, February 1st, an indication of the end of their tedious, rough voyage came in their meeting the ship *Pomeroi*,⁴² sailing from Charleston, South Carolina, to London. By her, letters to friends in England were mailed, John writing a brief one to brother Samuel to assure the folks at home of his and the others' safety.

Wednesday, February 4th, soundings told of less than twenty fathoms of water. "About noon the trees of Georgia were visible from the mast, and in the afternoon from the main deck." The *Diary's* last notation for this day is: "Saw Land! Read a Great Door and effectual, et cetera." The latter item, he explains in his *Journal*. "In the Evening Lesson were these words: 'A great door and effectual is opened.' Oh, let no one shut it!" The quotation is from First Corinthians 16:9. He was not dreaming in describing the New World as such a door in religious concerns. He could not know that he would open it only a little, but that its wide opening would be done by the hand of a man in England, now being readied for that work. Yet so it would be.

Thursday, February 5, 1736, the voyage ended. "Between two and three in the afternoon, God brought us all safe into the Savannah River," Wesley wrote. "We cast anchor near Tybee Island, which gave us a specimen of America. The pines, palms and cedars, running in rows along the shore, made an exceeding beautiful prospect, especially to us who did not expect to see the bloom of spring in the depth of winter. The clearness of the sky, the setting sun, the smoothness of the water conspired to recommend this new world and prevent our regretting the loss of our native country."

Parts of this paragraph are from Ingham's *Journal*.⁴³ He adds this of himself as he sees the New World: "I was struck with a deep, religious awe, considering the greatness and the importance of the work I came upon, but was comforted with these words in the Psalms: 'O tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong, and He shall comfort thy heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.' From the whole service, I was moved to think that the Gospel would be propagated over the whole world. May God, of His great mercy, graciously be pleased to grant it!"⁴⁴

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THAT JOHN WESLEY'S "experiences in Savannah and Frederica were to affect his whole career and life's work," is Mr. Ralph A. Graves' estimate of the impact of Georgia upon him. It is a true and an adequate judgment. John himself named it a "new era."¹ How Georgia did affect him, and how far it was a new era for him, are the themes of this chapter.

The degree of truth in these estimates has been obscured too often by the disproportionate attention given certain parts of his experience in Georgia, by which Wesley himself has been ridiculed and discounted—such matters as his High Church ways and his love affair with Sophia Hopkey. Yet even these phases of his life during this brief period hold high approval of him: the first, by his freer modes; the second, by the real motive for what occurred. The broad, accurate fact of primary significance about John Wesley's sojourn in Georgia is his meeting these occasions and conditions which made fundamental differences in, and additions to, his thought, life, work, and, also, to his quest. The profuse, tangled but highly interesting settings should not obscure their presence or power. Patiently uncover these things. One of them, because its vast significance requires quite lengthy presentation, will be found in the next chapter. The others appear in this.

John's new era is divisible, though not too sharply, into four phases, characterized thus: settlement, ministries, trouble and departure. In respect of their time, the first and last periods are brief; the others, longer.

Sketch the geographic scene of these events. The area is the hundred-mile-long coast of Georgia, from Cumberland Island at the south to Tybee Island at the north: and an inland reach very narrow at the former but at the latter reaching at one time to Old Ebenezer, twenty-five miles west of Savannah.

Beginning where the *Simmonds* anchored at Tybee Island, now a popular Savannah beach resort, westward was Thunderbolt, where three families had settled "near a small ruinous fort." Six miles west was

Savannah. Next west lay an Indian town. Near it was "Irene," where, on a "small round hill," the so-named "Indian School" was built in 1736, the land being donated by the Indians to Benjamin Ingham for that purpose. A mile farther, and along the Savannah River, lay the land of a Captain Watson, on which stood an "unfinished house, swiftly running to ruin." Adjoining this was "Cowpen," the plantation of Mrs. Matthews. She had been Mary Musgrove and would yet be Mrs. Thomas Bosomworth, her then husband being chaplain to Oglethorpe's soldiers.² A half-breed Indian, the General had found her helpful in parleys with the Indians.

Then came "Captain William's plantation"; next it, "Walter Augustine's settlement"; and near it, the plantation of Sir Francis Bathurst, the last two "left without inhabitant." "Joseph's Town," the settlement of two "Scottish gentlemen," was next. Farthest northwest was Abercorn, where in 1733 ten families were settled.

Turning a bit southwest, one comes to New Ebenezer,³ built in March, 1736, by the Saltzburgers, who had built also Old Ebenezer. From the latter, its builders had been driven by the unnavigability of a creek, the high waters from heavy rains upon its surrounding hills, and the barrenness of the soil. Only two English families now occupied it.⁴ Then was Highgate, where all but one family were French. After it came Hampstead, a German village.

Going south fifty miles, one came to what had been named "New Inverness"⁵ but was in Wesley's time, Darien, the "settlement of Scotch Highlanders." Fearing Spanish invasion,⁶ they had built in the spring of 1736 a large fort within which the entire town lived. Thirty miles farther south stood the "southernmost settlement," Fort St. Andrew, standing on a bluff of Cumberland Island.

Northward twenty miles lay St. Simon's Island, where the Wesleys would work almost vainly. Still standing is the huge live oak under which John Wesley preached. At the island's northern end was Frederica, both the village and the fort. Up the coast eighteen miles was Fort Argyle. It was a "small, square, wooden fort, musket-proof, where "ten freeholders" had settled but eight had gone. Forty miles farther on was Skidaway Island, just south of Tybee. In 1734, ten families had settled here but some died; the others had left.

This area comprised four kinds of terrain: pine-barren, oakland, marsh, swamp. Wesley noted the weather was: air, generally clear; rains, shorter but heavier than England's; dews, "very great"; from May through August, daily severe thunderstorms, "extremely scorching" heat

from ten in the morning to four in the afternoon but tempered by a sea breeze; in winter, mornings were sharp, mid-day was warm, and nights "piercing cold."

Such being the natural environment, the human was this: Indians—Uchees, Creeks, Cherokees, Chicasaws, and Choctaws (to Wesley, the last as the best of them); Irish, Scotch, French, Germans, Spanish Jews, Negroes, and English. All were jittery at the threats of treachery and invasion by the French and the Spaniards. Brought together from three geographic extremities of Europe and its middle; having been together for only a year or two; and most of them understanding no language save their own, these folk under English leadership were to fell primeval forest, farm never broken ground, lay out ordered communities, and build homes, shops, courthouse, schools and places of worship. The gigantic size of their task must be ever the measuring line of their success.

Much of this area became John Wesley's parish. In March, 1736, he estimated the number of his parishioners as 700.⁷ July of the following year, his own door-to-door census of Savannah alone listed 518 inhabitants, of whom 149 were under sixteen years of age.⁸ Of these people, most are forgotten entirely, but others will come alive as theirs and John Wesley's paths meet.

By John Wesley's period of settlement is included the time between the arrival of the *Simmonds*, February 5th, and the day he moved into the rectory in Savannah, March 15th. During these five weeks, the Wesley party lived "between shipboard and the encampment on the shore."⁹

The major occurrence of this time is related to John Wesley's quest. The day after arriving at Tybee came this: "About eight in the morning I first set my foot on American ground," wrote John. Oglethorpe led him and others through the "moorish land on the shore to a rising ground," where all knelt to pray. The General next appointed John and John Brownfield to "take care of the passengers" and left for Savannah. Others having come ashore, Wesley led on to some open ground, surrounded by verdure which shielded from sun and sheltered from wind, where he conducted a service. The Scriptures, "wonderfully suited to the occasion," were of the "courage and sufferings of John the Baptist, our Lord's first directions to the first preachers of His gospel, and their toiling at sea and deliverance—with these comfortable words: 'It is I, be not afraid.'"

After dining ashore, he returned to the ship, finding this: "The crew and such passengers as were left on board were demoralized, in fact drunk."¹⁰ Having been given charge of the people, the next morning early, he summoned them to him for an hour of "talk on business." The debauch of yesterday was part of the business. His word was supported by his act, his *Diary* for 7 A.M. reading, "Staved rum"—that is, he broke open the rum casks, most likely emptying their contents into the sea. Curnock comments: "Wesley's first deed, after landing in America, was the registering of a vow of total abstinence from flesh and wine; his second, the staving of rum casks." Wesley himself, referring to Oglethorpe's charge to him, reports, "I found how hard it is to serve God without distraction in the midst of secular business. Happy are they who are delivered from this heavy cross, and so are they who bear it in the spirit of their Master."

In the evening of this February 7th, Oglethorpe returned, bringing with him the Moravian, August Spangenberg. He had come to Georgia with the First Moravian emigrants, sixteen in number, who landed at Charleston. Wesley met him; talked with him; and wrote this somewhat noncommittal report of it: "He told me several particulars relating to their faith and practice and discipline, all of which were agreeable to the plan of the first ages, and seemed to show that it was their one care, without desire of pleasing or fear of displeasing any, to retain inviolate the whole deposit once delivered to the saints."

Since this is the second of Wesley's four decisive contacts with the Moravians; and inasmuch as it is the first of the two most significant ones, it must be examined carefully. At this time, Wesley spoke with Spangenberg on Saturday evening. Sunday, before the 11.30 service, there was a meeting in which Spangenberg preached. Following the service, John Wesley and August Spangenberg had a confidential talk from 1 to 2:30 P.M.

Wesley's report of this "all-important" talk reads thus:

I asked his [Mr. Spangenberg's] advice with regard to myself—to my own conduct. He told me he could say nothing till he had asked me two or three questions:

"Do you know yourself? Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?"

I was surprised and knew not what to answer. He observed it and asked:

"Do you know Jesus Christ?"

I paused and said: I know He is the Saviour of the world."

"True," he replied. "But do you know He saved you?"

"I hope He died to save me," I answered.

"Do you know yourself?" [Spangenberg asked.]

I said, "I do." But I fear they were vain words.

After my answering, he [Spangenberg] gave me several directions, which may the good God who sent him enable me to follow.

The next day, Monday, February 9th:

In the afternoon, the boat not yet being come which was to carry Mr. Spangenberg and his people to Savannah, we took a walk on the shore. I asked him many questions, both concerning himself and the church at Herrnhut. The substance of his answers was this:

"I was left without father or mother when I was ten years old. From that age to eighteen I lived without the fear of God. I was sent to the University of Jena, where I spent some years in learning languages, and the vain philosophy which I have now long been labouring to forget. Here it pleased God, by some that preached His word with power, to overturn my heart. I immediately threw aside all my learning but what tended to save my soul. I shunned all company, and retired into a solitary place, resolving to spend my life there. For three days I had much comfort here, but on the fourth it was all gone. I was amazed, and went for advice to an experienced Christian. When I came to him I could not speak. But he saw my heart, and advised me to go back to my house and follow the business Providence had called me to. I went back, but was fit for nothing. I could neither do any business nor join in any conversation. All I could say to anyone was, Yes or No. Many times I could not say that, nor understand the plainest thing that was said to me. My friends and acquaintance looked upon me as dead, came no more to me, nor spoke about me.

"When I grew better, I began teaching some poor children. Others joining with me, we taught more and more, till there were about thirty teachers, and above two hundred scholars.¹¹ I was now desired by several universities to accept the place of professor of Divinity or Philosophy. But I utterly refused it, and begged of God with my whole heart that I might not be famous, but very little and unknown.

"I had spent some years thus, when Professor Breithaupt, of Halle,

died. Being then pressed to accept of his professorship, I believed it was the call of God, and went. I had not been long there before the Director of the University found many faults with my behaviour and preaching; and offences increased more and more, till, after half a year, a petition against me was sent to the King of Prussia, who sent an order to the commander at Halle; in pursuance whereof I was warned to leave the city within forty-eight hours. I did so, and retired to Herrnhut to Count Zinzendorf, whom I had known for several years. I wrote to the Directors that I desired to know my crimes; but they never sent an answer. I could easily have cleared myself by a public defence from all the imputations they had cast upon me; but I feared it might lessen the success of their ministry, and therefore chose to be silent.

"The village of Herrnhut contains about a thousand souls, gathered out of many nations. They hold fast the discipline, as well as the faith and practice, of the apostolical Church. I was desired by the Brotherhood last year to conduct about fifteen of them to Georgia, where two lots of ground were assigned them near the town of Savannah, and another in the country; and with them I have stayed ever since."

I asked, whither he was to go next? He said, "I have some thoughts to go to Pennsylvania.¹² But what God will do with me I know not. I am blind. I am a child. My Father knows; and I am ready to go wherever He calls."

Ere studying Spangenberg's testimony to Wesley, tarry to note the arresting scene presented here. In some part of the *Simmonds*, on a Saturday evening; there again, on Sunday afternoon; and on Monday afternoon, strolling along the shore of Tybee Island, for the first time in their lives, two young adults talk earnestly about religion. Both were sons of ministers. Both were university men: graduates and teachers. Both were young: Wesley, 33; Spangenberg, 32. Each would live to be 88. Both would spend long periods in the work of Christ—Spangenberg, 66 years; Wesley, 59.¹³ The ministry of each will attain a wide reach. That is now an unknown future: for the present, the significant facts are: one is a seeker who has found; the other, a seeker still seeking. Study a little their interchanges.

The one on Saturday evening was indefinite, appearing to be enthused by Spangenberg's sketching the ways of the Moravian Community at Herrnhut. Wesley's judgment was that it really was planned after the

form of the early Church and was dedicated to the keeping of the "whole deposit once delivered to the saints." This latter is a reference to Jude 3. The significant term is the adjective "whole."

That long Sunday afternoon conversation with Spangenberg, John Simon estimates as "one of the crises"¹⁴ of Wesley's life. Curnock's evaluation of it is: "Popularly Wesley's indebtedness to Böhler is regarded as supremely important; but it is open to question whether, in reality, he did not owe more, both directly and indirectly, to Spangenberg."¹⁵

Wesley opened the interview by asking Spangenberg a question. "I asked Mr. Spangenberg's advice with regard to myself—to my own conduct." Note Wesley's words, "advice" and "conduct." Both smack of external practicalities, referring to his work as a minister on the ship and in the colony. What his father said quite recently about an inner witness, what his own sermon on "The Circumcision of the Heart" contained, and his principal motive for embarking for Georgia, which was the saving his own soul—all have been buried by the untoward developments of the voyage. His best efforts produced a little success but much trouble and opposition, even between himself and his three closest associates. It is likely John wanted to learn from Spangenberg either or both why this was so and what he should do. He was the puzzled administrator. Spangenberg was the possessor of the "enviable gift of introducing men to the living Christ," John Simon writes. He "listened sympathetically to Wesley's questions concerning his public conduct, but all the time he watched him with quiet eyes. He saw how intent he was on the religious reformation of his new parishioners . . . but he came to the conclusion that this ardent reformer was on the verge of severe disappointments. As the first work of a reformer is to reform himself, Spangenberg put a few piercing personal questions."¹⁶

"Do you know yourself? Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Spangenberg thrust vigorously at John Wesley himself: *yourself, your spirit, you are*. It is a highly probable inference that Wesley's detail of the condition of his nautical parish contained some severe strictures of the general religious ignorance of its personnel and, perhaps, even of their lack of some kind of religious experience.

Hence, Spangenberg said naught, "could say nothing" about such specific matters. He judged that the trouble might be that the master was not above his servants¹⁷ in things Christian and was not the greater who alone could raise the lesser.¹⁸

He does not question any of Wesley's procedures. Putting the entire matter in the area of personal, definite and innerly attested experience of Christ as Saviour, the Moravian smote the Methodist thrice. Conscious of it or not, Spangenberg did exactly what Jesus did in His conversation with Nicodemus, as is recorded in Chapter 3 of John's Gospel. From the two final verses of the preceding chapter, it is likely that Nicodemus came to Jesus with some concrete proposal concerning things Jewish and, to introduce it, began with the remarks upon Jesus as a teacher, as given in Chapter 3:2. At the end of this verse, the punctuation should be a dash; for Nicodemus had only arrived at what he came to say, and his lips were formed to state it. Jesus, seeing this and knowing what his visitor was about to say, cut him off and hurled him at once into the area of His Kingdom and into the only mode of being of it—that is, the necessity of experiencing a radical and personal inner change ere he can either see or enter even the earthward phase of that kingdom.

So did Spangenberg plunge Wesley into the Mindanao Deep¹⁹ of God's spiritual ocean. He confronted Wesley with this neglected but recurring and integral phase of the Gospel, much to the Moravian's credit. Nicodemus was lost in this new area: likewise, Wesley was aghast. The Pharisee wrestled with the "how"—the means by which, the way to the stated change. The Methodist was surprised into silence.

One wonders at John's surprise. Especially does he so, when he recalls the attention the Holy Club gave to the Scripture these past ten years. Nor is wonder lessened by adding his father's reference to the "inner witness" as the prime attestation to the validity of the Christian faith. That was given only nine months ago. Neither is marvel mitigated by the content of his sermon of January 1, 1733, on "The Circumcision of the Heart."

Spangenberg next pursued him with a more general question: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Again there was silence. Then came the broad admission, "I know He is the Saviour of the world." It sounds grudging, evasive: and impersonal. The interrogator personalized it: "True; but do you know He has saved you?" Though it will be over two years before Wesley will come to a frank use of the personal pronouns—I, me, my—with reference to himself and Christ, he begins one here under the hammering of Spangenberg, saying, "I hope He has died to save me." A very human anomaly is here. A moment ago, John has asserted his sure conviction that Christ is the Saviour of the world. Simple logic (John was strong on logic) would have led him to conclude: I am part of that salvable world; therefore, Christ is my Saviour. In place of con-

viction, John had only a hope that he was included in Christ's saving work. Reason has been chained by something else, deep in his nature.

Pressing the point of the personal knowing as against the mere hoping, Spangenberg put to Wesley a final, measured question, "Do you know yourself?" Incapable or now unwilling to confess the truth, he answered simply, "I do." So said his lips. His heart declared they were "vain words." Thus ended that Sabbath-day interview on the *Simmonds*.

Between then and the day's close, there were varied items. Immediately after leaving Spangenberg, John spent half an hour in meditation and prayer. At six o'clock, he and Spangenberg sang together. John's *Diary* closed with these entries:

"Mr. Spallenberg²⁰ a wise man

! Advised me as to myself! The cross once more."

"Resolved to follow Christ!"

The exclamation points indicate turbulent happenings. The probabilities are these: an early morning talk with Ingham and Delamotte upon some matter about which they were not "at one"; an evening conference with Oglethorpe and his brother; the probing of his soul by Spangenberg; and the "several directions" the latter gave him, relating doubtless to the circumstances about which he asked advice. Curnock regards the latter as the contention over John's proposing to admit Mrs. Hawkins to the communion.²¹ It is clear, John decided to forge ahead.

The meeting between Spangenberg and Wesley on the ensuing Monday, February 9th, has a picturesque setting and an arresting content. While awaiting the ship which was to take Spangenberg and the new Moravian immigrants to Savannah, Wesley and he strolled along the shore of Tybee Island. John broached the theme of their talk: "I asked him many questions, both concerning himself and the church at Herrnhut"—that is, John resumes the subject he began last Saturday evening, when first he met Spangenberg, who spoke mostly about his own religious life. It impressed the seeker deeply.

Attentive reading of Spangenberg's résumé of his religious experience discloses a quite exact similarity between that which he already had and what Wesley would have. While, in Wesley's case, it is looking ahead, yet it is not improper to set the experiences of the two men beside each other.

Both entered university at near the same age: Spangenberg at 18; Wesley at 17. Both were enthralled by learning. The German "threw

aside all learning." The Englishman considered this, especially his ambition to excel in linguistics and philosophy. Though he had surrendered that ambition and its limited field, he never abandoned learning but majored heavily in such learning as fostered the Gospel. He channeled a vast deal of the varied intellectual fruitage of his day to the commonality of his movement.

Each turned away from people: Spangenberg "shunned all company"; Wesley separated himself from "all trifling acquaintance." Each loved and turned to solitude: one was rescued therefrom by going for "advice to an experienced Christian"; Wesley never lost his liking for it, used it at times, and mostly sacrificed it to his work, because of the world of the hereafter. Each found encouragement in his seeking: "much comfort" is Spangenberg's word; Wesley's is "much sensible comfort." Each found this comfort temporary: Spangenberg's continued three days; Wesley's apparently continued longer. At this transiency of comfort, both were astonished: "amazed," Spangenberg was; Wesley, "not a little surprised." Both entered into practical work: the Moravian organized a "collegium pastorale practicum"; the Methodist became teacher and guide of the Holy Club. Both were teachers. Both were criticized, and worse, for their beliefs and ways.

Between these interviews and Spangenberg's leaving Georgia on the following March 1st, it is likely there occurred another conversation between these two, which thirty-five years later John Wesley thus summarized: "Hearing that wise man Mr. Spangenberg describe the fruits of faith, I immediately cried out, 'If this be so, I have no faith.' He replied, 'You have faith, but small.'"

Early in 1736, then, John Wesley failed to grasp what the Moravians and Spangenberg endeavored to bring him to trust and, hence, to experience. That failure's cause most likely he knew at the time, but was either too stubbornly unwilling or too deeply ashamed to admit. However, in 1739, he confesses his not receiving their testimony was due to this: "I understood it not at first. I was too learned and too wise. So that it seemed foolishness to me." Four years ago, he had decided to abandon an ambition to succeed in learning. Here, however, such regard for learning as survived that resolve allowed to defeat the first real attack that the Gospel has made during his quest. Without doubt, it is true that in those February days of 1736, Wesley knew the effect Spangenberg's testimony would have upon himself: that it would obviate some way his endeavors to succeed in his quest by his own thinking powers. That John does not record any asking of his about Spangen-

berg's religious experience, but does record his inquiring about the man "himself" and his twice asking about Herrnhut ways, indicates he was either skeptical or disapproving or, most likely, hostile to it. The most forthright Gospel conversation recorded was one Spangenberg initiated, not Wesley. While he certainly admitted it to himself earlier, it was to be three years before he openly confessed the cause of his rejection of Spangenberg's attempt to put his feet upon the true path. To Spangenberg's Gospel as such, Wesley offered no objection; nor to Spangenberg's presentation of it; nor to Spangenberg the man. The trouble was in Wesley, the intellectually brilliant man: he bowed to brains.

John Wesley's confession is astonishing only to those whose idea of Wesley is as the victorious evangelist. Yet his was no unusual case. Aurelius Augustinus, the renowned Saint Augustine, when, aged nineteen ("that unsettled age of mine," he called it) swaggered, "and now I was chief in the rhetoric school, whereat I joyed proudly, and I swelled with arrogancy." With this spirit and amidst his grossly sensual living, he was awakened by reading Cicero's *Hortensius*, whose theme was an exhortation to the study of philosophy. Dissatisfaction with it arose from his noting the absence therein of the name of Christ. "Whatsoever was without that name," he wrote, "though never so learned, polished, or true, took not entire hold upon me. . . . For this name, according to Thy mercy, O Lord, this name of my Saviour Thy Son, had my tender heart, even with my mother's milk, devoutly drunk in, and deeply treasured." His mother Monica had done her part early and, therefore, well.

He knew where to find that name. "I resolved then to bend my mind to the Holy Scriptures, that I might see what they were. But behold, I see a thing not understood by the proud, nor laid open to children, lowly in access, in its recesses lofty, and veiled with mysteries; and I was not such as could enter into it, or stoop my neck to follow its steps. For not as I now speak, did I feel when I turned to those Scriptures; for they seemed to me to be unworthy to be compared to the stateliness of Tully: for my swelling pride shrunk from their lowliness, nor could my sharp wit pierce the interior thereof. Yet were they such as would grow up in a little one. But I disdained to be a little one; and, swoln with pride, took myself to be a great one."²² John Wesley's condition was like to Augustine's, but his admission is kindly compared with Augustine's devastating declaration of his spiritual bankruptcy, caused by his intellectual and cultural pride.

Markedly like Saint Augustine's is the experience of his older²³ con-

temporary, Eusebius Hieronymus, or Saint Jerome. He, too, was strongly bent upon spending his life and talents upon the ancient literature of Rome. He, also, was thrilled by the writings of Cicero. During a dangerous illness, he dreamed Christ "reproached him with caring more to be a Ciceronian than a Christian." He had read the Scriptures but "disliked their uncouth style." Having prayed, "O Lord, Thou knowest whenever I have and study secular manuscripts I deny Thee," he resolved to devote his scholarship to the Scriptures and did so for the remaining forty-seven of his eighty years, living for thirty-five of those forty years in Bethlehem of Judea.²⁴

There are evidences that Saint Paul, also a talented and educated man, surrendered at Athens to the spell of its cultural tradition but came to see that pride in one's knowledge reduced the Gospel, especially the Cross, to "foolishness." At Corinth, however, he saw the Gospel's transcendent wisdom; swung over into it completely, delineating its character in the first two chapters of the First Corinthian Epistles; and launched out upon the sea of his greatest success.

What confirmation these men accord Christ's word! "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."²⁵ This solely effective way of obtaining knowledge of things divine, all these men found and followed. Each is a monumental evidence that "God resisteth the proud"²⁶ but that the "meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way."²⁷ John Wesley, too, will find this divine epistemology. For the time, man's efforts exclude God's grace; mind shackles spirit; and culture clouds Christ.

In concluding the account of John Wesley's first contacts with August Spangenberg, this fact of divine leading should be marked prominently: John Wesley came to the New World seeking his salvation in the Georgia aborigines, but the Lord saw to it that his first religious contact there was with one of His experienced messengers! It was Spangenberg who, under God, unflinchingly thrust the sword of the spirit into the soul of Seeker Wesley.

Wesley's next three days were dark ones religiously. The bright in them is his singing with the Prussian officer, Captain Hermsdorf. Religiously, Hermsdorf was "very zealous," in John's judgment.²⁸ He seems to have been admitted into the quartet on the 10th. Otherwise, John's characterization of the day, as it concerns himself, was: "A poor, care-less, lukewarm day." The 11th saw this: "Did nothing . . . got no

good." A bit of an upturn is seen in the entry: "Myself and company nothing, but God all!

The turning to God is implemented on the 11th by resumption of his reading the Greek New Testament, in which he spent several hours. The evident omission of this for some time indicates how absorbed John was in trying pastoral work; in the oversight of the ships and people during Oglethorpe's absence; and in the new development of his quest. It indicates also how needy he was of some adequate help.

Saturday, February 14th, there occurs Wesley's first meeting with the main hope of his quest—the American Indian. Yesterday, Ingham wrote, "We received information that Tomo-Chachi and his beloved men were coming to see us. They sent us down a side of venison."

The New World's big moment for Wesley's quest is at hand. His Bible reading for the 13th included Zechariah 8, that prophet's picture of Jerusalem's restoration. Verses 7, 9, 20–23 must have appeared to him as having a bearing upon his own case, and he quotes them in his *Journal*. The remainder of the day, after song, talk and prayer with Spangenberg and the Germans, and a long rewarding talk with Oglethorpe, he spent from 10:25 to 4 P.M. in secretarial work for the general. Then he ate a bit.

He began the 14th sleepy and ill. Breakfast was "bread and prayer." Song with Spangenberg, talk with Oglethorpe, prayers and preaching, business and two hours of writing his "account" of the voyage brought near the time for meeting the Indians. The few minutes he had until it, he spent in reading his Greek Testament at First Thessalonians 2:14–16. One wonders whether or not John saw himself rebuked for his practical substitution of the Indians for the early Church as what he was to follow. Then he, Charles and Ingham donned their clerical garb.

"About one" in the afternoon, the Creek Indians came. "Tomo-Chachi, his nephew Thleeanouhee, his wife Sinauky (and the Meiko or King of the Savannah nation) with two of their chief women, and three of their children, came on board. (Tomo-Chachi, Sinauky, and Toanoh²⁹ were in English dress. The other women had on calico petticoats and coarse woollen mantles. The Savannah King, whose face was stained red in several places, his hair dressed with beads, and his ear with a scarlet feather, had only a large blanket which covered him from his shoulders to his feet. Sinauky brought us a jar of milk, and another of honey, and said she hoped when we spoke to them we would feed

them with milk, for they were but children, and be as sweet as honey towards them.)

"As soon as we came in they all rose and shook us by the hand. [Women as well as men. This was the more remarkable because the Indians allow no man to touch or speak to a woman, except her husband, not though she be ill or in danger of death.] When we were all sat down, Tomo-Chachi spoke by his interpreter, one Mrs. Musgrove, to this effect:

"I am glad you are come. When I was in England,³⁰ I desired that some would speak the Great Word to me; and my nation then desired to hear it. But since that time we have all been put into confusion. [The French have built a fort with one hundred men in it in one place, and a fort with one hundred men in it in another. And the Spaniards are preparing for war. The English traders,³¹ too, put us into confusion, and have set our people against hearing the Great Word. For they speak with a double tongue; some say one thing of it and some another.] Yet I am glad you are come. I will go up and speak to the wise men of our nation; and I hope they will hear. But we would not be made Christians as the Spaniards make Christians: we would be taught before we are baptized.'

"[All this he spake with great earnestness, and much action both of his hands and head, and yet with the utmost gentleness and softness both of tone and manner.]

"I answered, 'There is but One, He that sitteth in heaven, who is able to teach man wisdom. Though we are come so far, we know not whether He will please to teach you by us or no. If He teaches you, you will learn wisdom; but we can do nothing. We then [saluted them all as before and] withdrew.'

So reads the record of John Wesley's first contact, religiously, with the American aborigines. Since he tells in his *Diary* that he was writing his account of this interview at 2:15 P.M., it lasted about an hour. Three things about it should be noted:

1. The square brackets indicate the material Curnock took from the *Georgia Journal* of Benjamin Ingham. Inasmuch as he was not speaking any; and since he was to work specifically with Indian children, he had opportunity and reason for noting matters Wesley did not. To obtain his report, read the quote, omitting such bracketed parts.

2. Mark well the contrast in mien between Tomo-Chachi and Wesley. There was in the Indian a simplicity, a cordiality, a directness, an openness and, judging from what Ingham said of his gestures, a vigorous

feeling about the present religious opportunity. There was in his speech of welcome a pleading gentleness. He was aware of the impact upon them of the national rivalries and power politics of Spain, France and England, but he mentioned only the confusion these made in the Indian mind. Otherwise, he was concerned about the religion of the "Great Word." Whatever were the shortcomings of the Christian churches of England in 1734, they, according to Tomo-Chachi's testimony, had impressed upon him some tangible sense of the greatness of their Book and Message. Then, he himself and his people were ready to hear it. It was not given.

He admitted his Creeks were not Christian; said they now might be desirous to become such. He was strong in his rejection of the use of force in the advocacy of any religion—a cardinal and indispensable part of a future Constitution. Alongside many modern religious educationalists, he stood by his assertion that teaching was the proper mode of religious propagation. He was companion to myriads of contemporary Europeans in taking baptism as becoming a Christian.

Judged by his reply, John Wesley was stiff, quite glozingly general, evasive and brief.

3. There is another contrast: between John's idealized picture of the Indians, drawn in England, and the reality, seen in Georgia. Recall his glowing expectations: they would sift his beliefs, rejecting the false and confirming the true. Nine days after the *Simmonds* cast her anchor, Seeker Wesley first meets some of these Indians, only to find they also were seekers, expecting to obtain from him what he hoped to gain from them. Though he ignorantly had set them an impossible task, their asking him to teach and to baptize them was not setting him an impossible work. In England, he had done plenty of teaching—to the peasantry at Wroote, to the Holy Club, and to his students at Oxford, and to the prisoners in its jails and the children in its houses. Language was no insuperable barrier, for he was a master in linguistics. On the voyage, he learned usable German and began work in one of the Indian tongues.

Before beseeching Tomo-Chachi, with the symbolic milk and honey before him, he retreated in a rout from teaching—from teaching what he knew: and he did know much worth teaching. Baptism, he did not mention even. He retreated to these generalities: only God is able to teach man wisdom; if He teach, man will obtain wisdom; we do not know whether or not He will teach you by us; and "we can do nothing."

One marvels at this brush-off. How shall one account for it? Had Oglethorpe's primary but quite hidden intention to keep John Wesley

as minister to the European colonists, to use him as a substitute overseer and to have the advantage of Wesley's ability to stand arduous clerical work led him to forbid John to engage himself in any way with the Indians? Of this opposition all through his Georgia stay, Wesley will complain.²³ Does his "We can do nothing" refer to this opposition?

Was he unwilling to commit himself until he was settled? Was effort balked by his now really measuring the magnitude of the task? Was he hampered by his present stern principles? Has the recent slump in his quest, along with his sleepy and sickly feeling of this morning weighed him down? Did a realization of how little he had done with the English passengers make any new outreach too appalling for acceptance? Has his conversations with Spangenberg so disclosed to him his own emptiness, that recognition of it causes him to drop all? Later, he will show this pattern of conduct. Has Tomo-Chachi made him to discern that, since neither had aught to give but each sought help from the other, both of them must go to a source greater than either? Read in this sense, his words to the Indian are the only sound theology and sure procedure for each. Therefore, was he not saying, there is but one, He that sitteth in heaven, who is able to teach man wisdom—you, Tomo-Chachi, you, Sinauky, and me, John Wesley?

Shaking hands again, Ingham, Charles and John "withdrew."

For Wesley's quest, this visit of some Indians could have meant two things. It could have brought him to see that, having nothing to give another, he actually had naught for himself. Then, it could have done something to direct his quest away from man—even from himself and his own powers.

Sunday, February 15th, "another party of Indians came." These were of the Savannah tribe. "They were all tall, well-proportioned men, and had a remarkable softness in their speech and gentleness in their whole behaviour." Except for three of them, who remained to hunt with Oglethorpe, all of the Indians went home. Included in these were Tomo-Chachi. With these Savannah Indians, no religious conversation is recorded.

The 16th, John called a "Hurry-day." For him, it began at 4 A.M. and ended at 10:30 P.M. An hour he spent with Spangenberg. Seven hours he wrote for the General, though Charles was his official secretary. The probable reason for this arduous writing was the need to catch up with correspondence before Oglethorpe left for the Altamahaw River area for the purpose of founding a settlement there. At 6:30 P.M., he

left Savannah for that area, taking along fifty men, Ingham, Hermsdorf and three Indians.

Thursday, February 19th, was a day arduous and significant, for in it he made his first visit to the Indians.

Rising from a cold bed at 3:30 A.M., two hours later he took a boat with some others. There was a "hard gale" which made them row, requiring five hours to reach the town. His statement of his purpose in visiting the town saw this: "My brother and I took boat, and, passing by Savannah, went to pay our first visit in America to the poor heathens. But neither Tomo-Chachi nor Sinauky was at home. Coming back, we waited upon Mr. Causton, the Chief Magistrate of Savannah. From him we went with Mr. Spangenberg to the German brethren. About eleven we returned to the boat, and came to our ship about four in the morning." An arduous day it was, indeed—twenty-five hours, ten of rowing a boat; twelve of visiting; and three, 7 to 10 P.M., of sleep at Mr. Causton's! Twice, he was with his clerical predecessor, Mr. Quincy; and they have "a good time together." With Spangenberg, he attended the German service. There is no record of any specific conversation between them.

The village of Tomo-Chachi was four miles beyond the town. Along the way, they got Mrs. Musgrove to accompany them as interpreter. The village reached, Tomo-Chachi and Sinauky were not at home. Whether or not Wesley said anything to such of the tribe as might have been at home is not recorded. Pertinent to the whole affair is only John's characterization of Tomo-Chachi and Sinauky as "the poor heathens." Between his earlier glowing description of them and this, there is a wide disparity. In five days, the Georgia Indians have ceased to be poetry and have become poor prose. Realism struck hard.

John's *Journal* for Sunday, the 22nd, contains only one brief entry: "Mary Welch, aged eleven days, was baptized according to the custom of the first Church, and the rule of the Church of England, by immersion. The child was ill then, but recovered from that hour." Here is a specimen of what is regarded as John Wesley's High Churchmanship.

The points to note are four. First, it was not done in a church. Second, its form was immersion, not sprinkling or pouring. Third, the immersion was "Trine"—that is, done three times.³³ Fourth, for his authority so to do, Wesley had the "rule" of his own church and the "custom of the first Church." Finally, illness added the character of emergency. The language is terse. It bears the temper of independence

with a dash of challenge or defiance. However, these are the facts upon which any judgment can be passed: and prejudice or opinion are not judgment. The result, accompaniment or circumstance of physical recovery can be questioned or dismissed only by those too dull or doubtful to accord any credence to the Psalmist's exclamation, "My heart and my flesh³⁴ crieth out for the living God."

Curnock's assay of the imputed High Churchism of John Wesley is as follows:

"Wesley ordered all his church life, his administration of the sacraments, his daily devotions, public and private, his weekly fasts, his observance of Sundays and other holy days, according to what he believed to be the custom of the early Church. So far as these *Diaries* and the *Journal* are concerned, there is no evidence that his churchmanship was 'high' in any other sense. In his strict observance of rites and ceremonies, in his loyalty to rubrics and canon law, in his belief that the *Book of Common Prayer* met all the religious needs of individual and national life, John Wesley was a High Churchman of the early Church type. . . . The *Georgia Journal* and *Diary* suggest a devout, somewhat antiquated High Church Protestant. . . ."

Remember, this is said of the Wesley of 1725-1738. Thereafter came changes. The deepest were in the area of the spirit; the external ones were compelled by the necessity of going to the people and of meeting their multitudinous response; but, through it all, certain time-honored church ways were never discarded.

Settlement advances a step on February 25th: Wesley and Delamotte moved from the *Simmonds* to Savannah. Mr. Quincy was still in the rectory, therefore, "Mr. Delamotte and I took up our lodging with the Germans." John welcomed this: "We had now an opportunity, day by day, of observing their whole behaviour. For we were in one room with them from morning to night, unless for the little time I spent in walking. They were always employed, always cheerful themselves, and in good humour with one another; they had put away all anger, and strife, and wrath, and bitterness, and clamour, and evil-speaking; they walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and adorned the Gospel of our Lord in all things."

The voyage residence on ship is ended now. Oglethorpe has been away from the *Simmonds* most of the time since anchor was cast. Some of the English, with Ingham, have gone to Frederica to begin the settlement there. Charles Wesley's secretaryship has taken him often most

likely to where Oglethorpe was. Finally, these last two of the quartet move into the town.

How Delamotte regarded this close association with the Moravians is not stated. John's was stated. However, here again appears his scientific attitude. It has appeared in him during the voyage, especially in the heavy storm a month ago, January 25th. Now, he has opportunity to observe their "whole behaviour" amidst the security of land residence and settled occupation. In it all, their daily life "adorned" the Gospel of Christ, so Wesley judged.

While John in the evening was ruling his *Diary*, Spangenberg and Nitschmann came, and these three talked together until quarter after eleven, when John and Spangenberg bedded down on the ground.

Four o'clock the next morning, both have risen and are at prayer together. At 11 A.M., the three along with others take boat for Savannah, arriving at 1.45 P.M. In the afternoon, the three, joined by Andrew Döber, went to Cowpen, "where they saw the ground allotted for the house" for Ingham. After casual talk about the site, Wesley "conversed seriously" with the three Moravians until six o'clock, again till seven, and a third time till nine. Then they sang till ten, retiring at eleven. The seeker is surely searching relentlessly amidst the Moravians.

What some of these earnest and frequent talks involved is probably the subject mentioned in the *Diary* for Friday, February 27th, where Curnock found this: "At 1.30 he and Spangenberg discussed 'mystical divinity,' his friend acknowledging himself a 'mystic.'" At 6.15, they are together again and talk of Mr. Gambold of Oxford, who became a mystic. The vast importance of these discussions to John Wesley will appear in the next chapter. Here it is required to recall that, William Law having commended the mystic writings of Jacob Böhme to Wesley, he had read much therein during the voyage. Now he is discussing the subject with his trusted and religious friends. His quest is beginning to make one of its most far-reaching and sound changes—from the most treacherous of quicksands to the firmest of rock.

Having seen the Moravians as persons, passengers, fearless in storm and as a Christian community, he is afforded on Saturday, February 28th, the opportunity of seeing them as a church.

This day, before 9 A.M., the three, along with Andrew Döber and Anton Seifart, again threshed over mysticism. That evening, the Moravians "met to consult concerning the affairs of their church; Mr. Spangenberg being shortly to go to Pennsylvania, and Bishop Nitschmann

to return to Germany." John recorded: "After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop." Anton Seifart, "a far-seeing and humble-minded man," was elected and ordained. John was impressed thus: "The great simplicity, as well as solemnity of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not, but Paul the tentmaker or Peter the fisherman presided, yet with the demonstration of the spirit and of power."

Alongside Wesley's reputed High Church ways, put his warm approval of an episcopal election and ordination. Yesterday afternoon, he had heard Spangenberg deny apostolic succession—part at least of the cause of Wesley's freer later ways. This evening, he experiences a prime church procedure of a kind not practiced commonly. The preparation was several hours of discussion and of prayer: the electing and ordaining authority was the church or group as a whole: there was no pomp: there was "great simplicity and solemnity." The English visitor was but a spectator; yet was a sensitive, intelligent and appreciative one. He was well acquainted with the ways of the early Christian Church. This, however, took him back to the first Christian Church of Acts 1.15–26, to the election of Matthias: and back to Paul's instructing and stationing his "own sons after the common faith."³⁵ Above it all was the "demonstration of the spirit and of power."³⁶

Six days, then, after the so-regarded High Church baptism of an eleven-day-old child, John Wesley participates as a visitor in this well-prepared, democratic, simple and spirit-dominated rite. Inasmuch as we do not know how far he intended to carry High Church ways, but do know only how far he did so, it is not possible to measure what alteration this Moravian contact did effect now in Georgia in Wesley's ways. However, because his conduct pattern ever was new light, then consonant resolution, it is very likely that from this same evening it made some difference. Down his ensuing years it, especially its spirit, made large changes in his administration.³⁷

The next day, Sunday, February 29th, John Wesley, referring perhaps to all his Moravian contacts, estimated their value to him thus: "When I left England, I was chiefly afraid of two things: one, that I should never again have so many faithful friends as I left there; the other, that the spark of love which began to kindle in their hearts would cool and die away. But who knoweth the mercy and power of God? From

ten friends I am awhile secluded, and He hath opened me a door into the whole Moravian Church."³⁸

The period of settlement ends, and that of organization begins with this record in John Wesley's *Journal* for March 7th, Sunday: "I entered upon my ministry at Savannah by preaching on the Epistle for the day, being the 13th of the First Corinthians." This means, that he has become actively the minister of the parish, except in his nonoccupation of the rectory. There, his predecessor, Mr. Quincy, is still living. No friction existed between him and Wesley: they were together often, and their times together Wesley described as "good." On the afternoon of this Sunday, "Mr. Quincy read prayers and preached." A week later, John Wesley read prayers: Mr. Quincy preached; and the two joined in administering the eucharist. Monday, March 15th, Mr. Quincy left for Carolina.³⁹

John Wesley's first official sermon in Savannah was preached most likely in the building named the "Court House," used of necessity for several community purposes.⁴⁰ His description of the congregation was, "I saw the number of people crowding into the church, the deep attention with which they received the Word, and the seriousness that afterwards sat on all their faces. . . ." ⁴¹ The item of number was due largely to the presence of a new minister. The effect was the result of the sermon. Therefore, scan that first sermon of John Wesley's in the New World.

Its text was verse 3 of First Corinthians 13: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

The preacher began in a somber vein, realistic to the point of pessimism: "There is great reason to fear, that it will hereafter be said of most of you who are here present, that this Scripture, as well as all those you heard before, profited you nothing. . . ." More of the same strain ensued. "Why then do I speak this word at all?" the speaker queried, and replied, "Because a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me. . . . And with regard to you, my commission runs thus: 'Son of man, I do send thee to them; and thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord God;—whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.' " ⁴² His use of the term "dispensation" indicates his sense of destiny as consisting in a fresh presentation of the Gospel.

Prefaced by Jesus' statement, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the

commandments," the remainder of the introduction is a half-page list of good works. Public worship, private prayer, attention to the Scriptures, fasting, communion—all yield a power from on high by which they will be able to "do all the things which are enjoined in the law. These are: do good, distribute, deny self, take one's cross, and resist unto blood. What he said of giving one's goods leans towards community but remains within private ownership, which is reduced to a minimum: "It implies, not only divesting ourselves at once of all the worldly goods we enjoy, either from a fit of distaste to the world, or a sudden fit of devotion, but an act of choice coolly and steadily executed."

Now he spoke of love. It is the "love of God and man;—of God, for his own, and of man, for God's sake." Such love's effects are described in the chapter. Without this love, life cannot be happy, by happiness understanding "such a state of well being, as contents the soul, and gives it a steady, lasting satisfaction." Without this love, "nothing can make death comfortable. . . . By comfortable, I mean a calm passage out of life, full of even, rational peace and joy. And such a death, all the acting, and all the suffering in the world, cannot give without love." Comfortable death he illustrated by a partial description of his father's dying eleven months ago and by that of an unnamed Georgia colonist.

The bearing of this discourse upon the colonists' experiences and conditions is evident. Its timeliness will become more evident soon. Wesley did not choose purposely this Scripture for lesson and sermon: by pertinent coincidence, it was the prescribed reading for the day. From these, all his life John Wesley often preached.

To his own quest, two parts of the sermon relate themselves. The one is the fact that, in the long paragraph listing one's good works as a Christian, he put Christ's part in the whole in a small, detached place. After the paragraph's opening sentence, quoted above, he inserted this parenthesis: "(In order to this, 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.')" An afterthought, though it appears to have been, still faith in Christ and its subsequent condition are in his religious pattern; are properly made antecedent to true devotion and obedient living; but are not given specific primary reference nor true proportion.

The other quest-related fact is his advance in his view of death. Having been convinced life can be happy, he is convinced now that death can be "comfortable." It is only six weeks ago, also on a Sunday, that he and others in the congregation were near death in that fearful storm at sea. Between then and now, the entire colony knew its details, two of which were the frantic fright of some passengers and the "even,

rational peace and joy" of others. These latter are the features of a "comfortable death." He apparently has now no assurance of his own dying so, but he is sure such dying can be. He is equally sure the basis of such dying is the love of God for Himself and, because of that love, the love of one's fellows. Nothing is said as to how such love comes to any person.

This Sabbath evening, there occurred a confirmation of Wesley's belief in a comfortable death. "This evening one of the Moravians," he writes, "who had been long ill of a consumption, found himself much worse. On my mentioning it to Bishop Nitschmann, he smiled and said, 'He will soon be well; he is ready for the Bridegroom.'" The Bishop was unperturbed at death: it led to a better life.

Wednesday, March 10th, Lent began. It was "observed strictly. There is no indication of a meal from four in the morning until night." Twice, John read prayers and preached, thirty people attending each service. In between, he conversed seriously with several people, spent two hours with Delamotte and the Greek Testament and sang with John Reiner.

Saturday, the 13th, he saw Miss Sophia Hopkey and a Miss Fosset. It was at 9 A.M., in the home of Mr. Causton, Chief Magistrate of the Colony. "These ladies," Curnock writes, "were young, intelligent, attractive, and inclined towards a devout life." Sophia was a niece of Mrs. Causton's. At this meeting, Wesley did not appear to be impressed by them. The event, however, would develop into what probably was John's most intense romance and into the prime reason for his leaving Georgia. In a later chapter, much must be written of this.

Having become official minister in practice, sometime between March 7th and the 14th, Wesley did what he recorded on the latter. "Having before given notice of my design to do so, every Sunday and holiday, according to the rules of our church, I administered the holy communion to eighteen persons. Which of these will endure to the end?" Two of these eighteen were Sophia Hopkey and Miss Fosset, both of whom were "affected," the latter especially so.

The following day, he became official minister in residence. "Mr. Quincy going for Carolina, I removed into the minister's house. It is large enough for a larger family than ours, and has many conveniences, besides a good garden." He moved in at 8 A.M. Now he is possessed fully of the largest and last parish of which he will ever be official minister. So ends the time of settlement.

Two days later, Wednesday, the 17th, his time of trouble begins. It is Lent, a season John Wesley loved. He has public meetings on Wednes-

day evenings. What occurred this Wednesday he wrote of the next day to his mother: "Many of them [his parishioners] indeed are, I believe, very angry already: for a gentleman, no longer ago than last night, made a ball; but public prayers happening to begin about the same time, the church was full, and the ball-room so empty that the entertainment could not go forward."⁴³ It is clear Wesley did not hold the service to offset the ball but the opposite might have been the case. Before Wednesday evening, the town doubtless discussed the two events and quite likely some came to church to hear what the parson might say about the ball. Quite likely, others came to object to the ball by supporting Wesley. Certainly, some were wrathful at John for holding the meeting.

It is significant for both John Wesley's present and future life and work that "about this time," April 20th, he "transcribed and altered" a poem of George Herbert's on "Discipline":

Though I fail, I weep:
 Though I halt in pace,
 Yet I creep
 To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove:
 Love will do the deed:
 For with love
 Stonie hearts will bleed.

Throw away thy rod;
 Though man frail ties hath,
 Thou art God:
 Throw away Thy wrath.

From mid-May of 1736 to John Wesley's departure for England on December 22, 1737, trouble for him will wax. It will arise from his parish work. It has been seen that, when he came aboard the *Simmonds* last October, he was active at once in the religious opportunities offered by the crews and passengers, so much so that these works constituted his quest. They overlaid the other and primary means of his search, until certain distresses forced him to confess the inadequacy of his religious works to advance his own quest. Here and now, having become fully settled as parish minister or missionary, the same external pattern

appears: he addresses himself to the work with consuming zeal. His life is like the rushing, swirling, inundating of a swollen stream, quite careless of its banks and conscious only of a plethora of movement amidst the windings of general direction.

Much of this comes out of the life of the colony and its settlers, the story of "their donsie tricks, their black mistakes, their failings and mischances."⁴⁴ One regrets greatly the impropriety of following here the panorama of the Georgia colonists but the present subject requires presentation only of such items as relate themselves to Wesley's quest: and these will compose more than a mere sketch.

However, certain general facts form the broad background of the quest, and these are gathered quickly. The geographic field widens from Savannah to Frederica, a hundred miles south; and to Charleston, South Carolina. Five sections of the *Journal* record events at Frederica. It was the health-break and heart-break of Charles Wesley and the defeat scene of his brother. Six sections of the *Journal* relate events in Savannah. One of the visits to Charleston was of lasting significance in Wesley's quest and lifework.

Another general fact is John's becoming practically Oglethorpe's secretary. His brother was such officially, but he had no qualification at all for such work. He arrived at Frederica on March 9th, taking up both secretarial and religious duties. Having a propensity to pleurisy, the work, diet and sleeping (at least, the lying down) in cold and wet on the ground soon wrecked his health. Since the settlers there were mostly the unmarried men, their ways were rough, and objection to Charles Wesley's religious program expressed itself, on March 18th, by someone's shooting at him from ambush.⁴⁵ Having spent a whole day in letter-writing for the General, he exploded: "I would not spend six days more in the same manner for all of Georgia."⁴⁶ July 26th, he and John journeyed to "Charles Town,"⁴⁷ whence Charles, via Boston, left for England. In Boston, his illness detained him from September 24th until October 5th.⁴⁸ There several of the people and five physicians did all possible to help him. Oglethorpe, having learned before now how capable John Wesley was in secretarial work, kept him at it.

Steadily continuing all this time are concern about the Indians; contacts with the Moravians; and his quest. The major constant, this last is the area in which John Wesley is detached from and raised above all the other embroilings of his stay in Georgia. Forgetfulness, dismissal, disdain or minimizing of this steady, deep pursuit warp judgment of all else.

Antecedent to Wesley's informing his mother of anger at some of his ways are two High Church incidents which contributed thereto. His report of the one is: May 5th, "I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Parker's, second bailiff of Savannah; but Mrs. Parker told me, 'Neither Mr. P. nor I will consent to its being dipped.' I answered, 'If you certify that your child is weak, it will suffice (the rubric says) to pour water upon it.' She replied, 'Nay, the child is not weak, but I am resolved it shall not be dipped!' This argument I could not confute. So I went home; and the child was baptized by another person."⁴⁹ Thus, he has affronted one of the prominent official families of Savannah, an act which later might have saved him from one charge⁵⁰ but which operated against him in another.⁵¹

Four days later occurs this: "I began dividing the public prayers according to the original appointment of the Church: (still observed in a few places in England). The morning service began at five. The communion office (with the sermon) at eleven. The evening service about three."

Monday, May 10th, he began house-to-house visitation of his parishioners, for this using the time from noon to three o'clock, when the people could not work.

Late in May and early in June, through the experience of others death faces John Wesley. At Frederica, there was a soldier named Germain. In March, his violation of Oglethorpe's forbidding shooting on Sunday started much trouble. On May 28th, he was near death. "He had lost his speech and his senses. His eyes were set, neither had he any discernible motion but the heaving of his breast." John read the "Commendatory Prayer" from the Church's *Office for the Visitation of the Sick*. "While we stood round him, he stretched out his arms, rubbed his head, recovered his sight, speech and understanding; and immediately sending for the bailiffs, settled the affairs of his family; and then lay down and died." Upon this occurrence, Wesley wrote no comment.

Tuesday, June 1st, complete and confident trust concerning death came under his observation. He visited an unnamed aged man: "I asked him what he thought of paradise (to which he had said he was going); he said, 'To be sure, it is a fine place. But I don't mind that; I don't care what place I am in. Let God put me where He will, or do with me what He will, so I may but set forth His honour and glory.' " Wesley did comment upon this: "I was surprised to find one of the most controverted questions in divinity, disinterested love, decided at once by

a poor old man, without education or learning, or any instructor but the Spirit of God." Here are a certainty about one's place in the hereafter, producing an utter indifference to earthly condition and both deriving from full submission to the will of God. How much of this John noted, he said not. He understood it as "disinterested love." Further, seeing the old one was not educated, he was sure it was the Holy Spirit who had been his Teacher. It is likely Wesley's trust to education and learning for success in his quest was lessened and his looking unto the revealing power of the Holy Spirit was increased. All this is of the greatest significance in the Gospel. The seed his mother sowed on August 18, 1725, has gotten above ground.

A different response to imminent death met him on June 6th and 7th. He visited a Mr. Lassel; asked how he was; and began this conversation: "'My departure,' said he, 'I hope is at hand.' I asked, 'Are you troubled at that?' He replied, 'Oh, no; to depart, and to be with Christ, is far better. I desire no more of this bad world. My hope and my joy and my love is there.' The next time I saw him he said, 'I desire nothing more than for God to forgive my many and great sins. I would be humble. I would be the humblest creature living. My heart is humble and broken for my sins. Tell me, teach me, what shall I do to please God? I would fain do whatever is His will.' I said, 'It is His will you should suffer.' He answered, 'Then I *will* suffer. I will gladly suffer whatever pleases Him.'

"Mon. 7—Finding him weaker, I asked, 'Do you still desire to die?' He said, 'Yes; but I dare not pray for it, for fear I should displease my heavenly Father. His will be done. Let Him work His will, in my life or in my death.' "

These responses to the experience of death do not equal those of the Moravians aboard the *Simmonds*, except as Mr. Lassel's words, "gladly" and "joy," come close to the Moravian singing. Still they are in the same general temper and spirit. How far these contacts aided John in overcoming his fear of death is not hinted: all he for the present had to say was it was God's will the dying man should suffer.

Tuesday, June 22nd, John learned directly how much of the Georgia folk regarded him. It came from William Horton at Frederica, whom Curnock spoke of "as a soldier, magistrate, and candid critic of Wesley's preaching."⁵²

"Observing much coldness in Mr. Horton's behaviour," Wesley writes, "I asked him the reason for it. He answered, 'I like nothing you do.

All your sermons are satires upon particular persons, therefore I will never hear you more; and all the people are of my mind, for we won't hear ourselves abused.

" 'Besides, they say they are Protestants. But as for you, they cannot tell what religion you are of. They never heard of such religion before. They do not know what to make of it. And then your private behaviour—all the quarrels that have been here since you came have been 'long of you. Indeed, there is neither man nor woman in the town who minds a word you say. And so you may preach long enough; but nobody will come to hear you.'

"He was too warm for hearing an answer, so I had nothing to do but to thank him for his openness, and walk away." The traditionally accepted old and the pursued but undawned new faced each other. The former had no bastion but custom, and no weapon but objection to difference therefrom. The latter has only an increasing number of fairly rough stones for a new bastion and only a sure sense of an over and inner guidance as a weapon. Mr. Horton had his say. "He was too warm for hearing an answer," John records: and he walked away.

If John Wesley required an antidote to this or a stimulant for his aggressive ways, it came the next day. During a "long conversation with a 'Mr. M—' about true religion, he saw this man had a real knowledge of it but, having spoken of it to others with no permanent results, had ceased to speak of it unless someone has desire and will to hear. This man confessed, 'I have not yet (I speak not of you or your brother) found one such person in America.'"

John comments in his *Journal*: "'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!' Mark the tendency of this accursed principle! If you will speak only to those who are *willing to hear*, see how many you will turn from the error of their ways! If, therefore, striving to do good, you have done hurt, what then? So did St. Paul. So did the Lord of life. Even HIS word was 'the savour of death' as well as 'the savour of life.'⁵³ But shall you therefore strive no more? God forbid! Strive more humbly, more calmly, more cautiously. Do not strive as you did before—but strive while the breath of God is in your nostrils."

A clear-cut statement of later Methodist aggressive evangelism, this is. It reveals Wesley as not dismayed by Mr. Horton's wrathful and sweeping tirade; nor as deceived by the supine surrender of Mr. M. He discards both and formulates his own policy. Whether or not he now gleams it, he has stated clearly and adequately a lifelong procedure. Around 1780 or 1788, he wrote a quite full statement of this

procedure in his sermon, "Of Reproving Our Neighbour." Its text was "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" Leviticus 19:17. Part of its final paragraph, spoken directly to his Methodist people, was: "I never heard or read of any considerable revival of religion, which was not attended with a spirit of reprovng. I believe it cannot be otherwise; for what is faith, unless it worketh by love? . . . Come, brethren, in the name of God, let us begin! Rich or poor, let us all arise as one man! And in any wise, let every man 'rebuke his neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.'"⁵⁴

Quest comes atop in late June and early July, when he has a brief but bright interview with an Indian. Sunday, June 27th, he had to relinquish his regular preaching place to Oglethorpe for a conference between him and a "large party of Creek Indians." John hoped their coming would mean also this:

"I hoped a door was opened for going up immediately to the Choc-taws, the least polished, i.e., the least corrupted of all the Indian nations. But upon my informing Mr. Oglethorpe of our design, he objected, not only the danger of being intercepted, or killed by the French there; but much more, the inexpediency of leaving Savannah destitute of a minister. These objections I related to our brethren in the evening, who were all of opinion, 'We ought not to go yet.'" So his *Journal* for June 30th reads.

The General's reasons might have comprised also the unmentioned one of Wesley's excellent secretarial ability. The brethren and the Moravians agreed with the General only to the extent that the present was not the expedient time for such a mission. Along with his clinging to his original and primary mission to America, his entry in his *Journal* reveals John as clinging also to his preconceived notion of the ideal red man. There is here an addition, however. Such an Indian he expected to find only amongst those who were the "least polished"—that is, least corrupted by the so-called "civilized" white man. For some reason, he expected to discover him or them in the superior Choctaw tribe. Was he already disillusioned concerning the perfect Indian by those whom he had met but still was keeping his theory and his hope by referring them to yet unseen Indians? If so, his position shows either or both the desperation of his quest, the stubbornness with which he held to a theory, and the thoroughness of his quest. He will investigate all possible areas.

Meantime, one wonders why he did not contact the Indians who

were at his door in Savannah. There is no record he did so on his own initiative. Apparently, Oglethorpe, knowing his relating his quest or his mission to the Indians, on Saturday, July 3rd, had the Creek chief, Chicali, to dinner. He invited Wesley, too. The meal over, John had with Chicali the ensuing interview:

Wesley: I asked the grey-headed old man, what he thought he was made for?

Chicali: He that is above knows what he made us for. We know nothing. We are in the dark. But white men know much. And yet white men build great houses, as if they were to live forever. But white men cannot live forever. In a little time, white men will be dust as well as I.

Wesley: I told him, "If red men will learn the good book, they may know as much as white men. But neither we nor you can understand that book, unless we are taught by Him that is above: and he will not teach unless you avoid what you already know is not good."

Chicali: I believe that. He will not teach us while our hearts are not white. And our men do what they know is not good: they kill their own children. And our women do what they know is not good: they kill the child before it is born. Therefore, He that is above, does not send us the good book.

Formulate Chicali's creed:

- I—I believe in Him "that is above."
- II—I believe He "made us."
- III—I believe He "knows what he made us for."
- IV—I believe the Indian alone "knows nothing."
- V—I believe "white men know much" about these things.
- VI—I believe all men will die.
- VII—I believe white men build as though they will live forever on the earth.
- VIII—I believe the knowledge men need is in the "good book."
- IX—I believe men alone cannot understand the "good book."
- X—I believe only God can teach men that book.
- XI—I believe God will not teach that book to men who are disobedient to the good they already know.
- XII—I believe God will not teach it to the impure in heart.

A glance discloses this as a highly significant statement. God as existing; God as Creator of men; God as creating for some purpose; Indian ignorance of that purpose; the white man's greater knowledge of it; the universality of death; the difference this fact should make in men; the Bible as containing what men need to know; the Bible as not understandable by man himself; adequate understanding of it as coming from God alone; God's refusal to teach it to any disobedient to the good they already know; God's inability to teach it to the impure in heart—each is a truth of vast import. Though Chicali's creed confined itself to God, man, the Bible, morality; though it omits Christ altogether; and though it only skirts the world-to-come, yet it is a great statement.

However, Chicali's creed is not to be taken as a "least polished" Indian's natural conception of religion, such as Paul refers to in Romans 1:19–20 and 2:14–15. For some time, these Indians have had some Christian contacts. Somewhere, they learned enough of the Bible to judge Spanish evangelical methods as wrong. Certainly, the influence of the Scotch and their minister was felt. The general mien and practice of the English were known, some of which surely was good. The spirit and practice of the Moravians were more known. Ledderhose, in his biography of Spangenberg, writes: "The brethren were occasionally rejoiced by visits from Indians, who attended their singing-meetings with reverential awe."⁵⁵ The Moravians had been singing in Georgia a considerable time ere Wesley talked with Chicali on that July day. Again, seven days after this conference between the Creek chief and the English cleric, there appeared some things some of Chicali's own people had been polished enough to know. That day, there was buried Miss Becky Bovey, one of John's prospective parishioners, who had died suddenly. "Almost the whole town" attended the service and, with the populace, some of these Creeks. Referring on July 20th to the burial service, these said, "We knew what you was doing. You was speaking to the beloved ones above, to take up the soul of the young woman."⁵⁶ Granting the power of such contacts, Chicali's creed still reveals a broad grasp of religious principles, even of some of the Christian faith's.

Though Chicali might have sensed in Wesley an unfinished and a disturbing unknown, he scarcely could have known with any adequacy and detail the inner unrest of his questioner. Therefore, he could not have known the bearing of his creed upon Wesley's own case.

To his case, Wesley could have seen several relevant matters: both

were seekers; both to date were failures in finding: both failed to find by their employed modes—the Indian confessed this frankly but the white man said naught; both were hunting helpers—the chief was sure his would be the white man, and the white man had been sure his would be the red man; the latter was certain the Bible contained what he wanted to know and ought to know—the former did not admit his ten years of Bible study had not given him what he sought. John's statement on this point is excellent in its truth: his given way of understanding the Bible is as true as Jesus' teaching in John 14:26 and Paul's in First Corinthians 2:6–7, 10–11; and his last sentence is the basic principle of the General Rules of the Methodist Church.

Did John see that in some points at least, this Indian was as far on as he himself was? He expected to find the Indians as void of any "vain philosophy with which to construe away" the Bible's text, but did he see now that what text the Indian had he was not the least inclined to construe away but was all bent to view the Bible as alone containing what he ought to know, desired to know? Wesley expected from the Indian confirmation of what he had been teaching: did he see now he has gotten such confirmation for all of his teaching he has put before this Indian? Did he not notice the Indian was ready and reaching for more than Wesley has said?

If so, John made no attempt to supply it. He neither prolonged the interview nor provided for resuming it. He appointed no time for reading to Chicali. This is a strange omission in his usual procedure. During the voyage, he read something to someone almost daily. Here at Savannah, he will read religious works with Sophia Hopkey,⁵⁷ Delamotte,⁵⁸ groups at the rectory,⁵⁹ his congregation,⁶⁰ the Germans at Hampstead,⁶¹ the French at Highgate⁶² and at Savannah.⁶³ Why not read with Chicali? Language was no hard hurdle. In linguistics, John was adept. He learned German that he might talk with the Moravians, and soon now will begin learning Spanish that he might converse with the Jewish folk in his parish.⁶⁴ Aboard ship, he began an Indian lexicon. Why not learn Creek to enable him to talk with, or read to, Chicali?

There is here an arresting deviation. What caused it? Was Oglethorpe's prohibition sufficient deterrent?⁶⁵ Was John already well enough acquainted with the opinionated, harsh, dissembling, intemperant Creek character⁶⁶ to be deceived by Chicali, whose besetting sin was drunkenness? Or did Wesley realize he had no message of power sufficient for the sins he recognized in himself and those he saw

in others? All these could be contributory causes, but the last one alone appears to furnish adequate answer. After Aldersgate, he will preach to English people, many of whom were as evil as any Georgia aborigine, and will witness and invite:

Look unto Him, ye nations; own
Your God, ye fallen race!
Look, and be saved through faith alone;
Be justified by grace!

See all your sins on Jesus laid;
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once on offering made
For every soul of man.

Harlots, and publicans, and thieves
In holy triumph join;
Saved is the sinner that believes
From crimes as great as mine.

Murderers, and all ye hellish crew,
Ye sons of lust and pride,
Believe the Saviour died for you;
For me the Saviour died.

Awake from guilty nature's sleep,
And Christ shall give you light,
Cast all your sins into the deep,
And wash the Ethiop white.

With me, your chief, you then shall know,
Shall feel your sins forgiven;
Anticipate your heaven below,
And own that love is heaven.⁶⁷

Now, however, he has nothing for Chicali, chief but a drunkard. The Indian, on his part but unconsciously, both exposed the need of John Wesley and damaged or destroyed the hope for his own salvation he had in the American Indian.

Fear of death again thrust itself into his quest on the evening of July 10th, the day Becky Bovey died, when there came a storm of

thunder and lightning whose equal he had not seen in Georgia. It aroused him: "This voice of God, too, told me I was not fit to die: since I was afraid, rather than desirous of it. O when shall I wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ? When I love Him with all my heart."

Between this and what he saw in the Moravians on the *Simmonds*, there is disparity. There, he saw a demonstration that faith in God could give peace in the face of death. Here, Wesley's alternative to that fear is not a quiet awaiting of it but is the attainment of a desire to die, because of what is beyond it—that is, being with Christ. This is victory over death. Such victory is to be won by loving Christ with all his heart. In this appears the theme of his first official sermon of last March 7th: one is to love God only. It might reflect, too, the hymn of Miguel Molinos, the Spanish mystic:

For Thee my thirsty soul doth pant,
While in this desert land I live;
And, hungry as I am, and faint,
Thy love alone can comfort give.⁶⁸

July 20th saw another conference with Indians at 9 A.M. There were five of the Chickasaw tribe present—all warriors, the head ones being Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw. These were from the tribe which John Wesley regarded as little affected by contacts with white men and whom, therefore, he was very desirous of seeing in the hope of receiving from them aid in his quest. He conducted the interview as a catechism. There were twenty questions and answers on these subjects: God, creation, God's love, God's providence, communication with the beloved ones, immortality, the Bible, and the source of their religious knowledge.

Because this is the zenith of Wesley's quest among the Indians, and because, therefore, it represents the most he received from any of them, the report, written at the time in shorthand by Charles, is given here in full:

Q. Do you believe there is One above who is over all things?

A. Paustoobee answered, We believe there are four beloved things above: the clouds, the sun, the clear sky, and He that lives in the clear sky.

Q. Do you believe there is but One that lives in the clear sky?

A. We believe there are Two with Him, Three in all.

Q. Do you think He made the sun, and the other beloved things?

A. We cannot tell. Who hath seen?

Q. Do you think He made you?

A. We think He made all men at first.

Q. How did He make them at first?

A. Out of the ground.

Q. Do you believe He loves you?

A. I do not know. I cannot see Him.

Q. But has He not often saved your life?

A. He has. Many bullets have gone on this side and many on that side; but He would never let them hurt me. And many bullets have gone into these young men; and yet they are alive.

Q. Then, cannot He save you from your enemies now?

A. Yes, but we know not if He will. We have now so many enemies round about us, that I think of nothing but death. And if I am to die, I shall die, and I will die like a man. But if He will have me to live, I shall live. Though I had ever so many enemies, He can destroy them all.

Q. How do you know that?

A. From what I have seen. When our enemies came against us before, then the beloved clouds came for us. And often much rain, and sometimes hail, has come upon them; and that in a very hot day. And I saw, when many French and Choctaws and other nations came against one of our towns; and the ground made a noise under them, and the beloved ones in the air behind them; and they were afraid, and went away, and left their meat and drink and their guns. I tell no lie. All these saw it too.

Q. Have you heard such noises at other times?

A. Yes, often; before and after almost every battle.

Q. What sort of noises were they?

A. Like the noise of drums, and guns, and shouting.

Q. Have you heard any such lately?

A. Yes; four days after our last battle with the French.

Q. Then you heard nothing before it?

A. The night before I dreamed I heard many drums up there; and many trumpets there, and much stamping of feet and shouting. Till then I thought we should all die. But then I thought the beloved

ones were come to help us. And the next day I heard above a hundred guns go off before the fight began; and I said, "When the sun is there, the beloved ones will help us, and we shall conquer our enemies." And we did so.

Q. Do you often think and talk of the beloved ones?

A. We think of them always, wherever we are. We talk of them and to them, at home and abroad; in peace, in war, before and after we fight; and, indeed, whenever and wherever we meet together.

Q. Where do you think your souls go after death?

A. We believe the souls of red men walk up and down, near the place where they died, or where their bodies lie; for we have often heard cries and noises near the place where any prisoners had been burned.

Q. Where do the souls of white men go after death?

A. We cannot tell. We have not seen.

Q. Our belief is, that the souls of bad men only walk up and down; but the souls of good men go up.

A. I believe so too. But I told you the talk of the nation.

(Mr. Andrews—They said at the burying, they knew what you were doing. You were speaking to the beloved ones above, to take up the soul of the young woman.)

Q. We have a book that tells us many things of the beloved ones above; would you be glad to know them?

A. We have no time now but to fight. If we should ever be at peace, we should be glad to know.

Q. Do you expect ever to know what the white men know?

(Mr. Andrews—They told Mr. Oglethorpe they believed the time will come when the red and white men will be one.)

Q. What do the French teach you?

A. The French black kings never go out. We see you go about: we like that; that is good.

Q. How came your nation by the knowledge they have?

A. As soon as ever the ground was sound and fit to stand upon, it came to us, and has been with us ever since. But we are young men; our old men know more: but all of them do not know. There are but a few whom the Beloved One chooses from a child, and is in them, and takes care of them, and teaches them. They know these things; and our old men practise; therefore they know. But I do not practise; therefore I know little.

Evaluate this awhile.

Paustoobee was sure of the existence of God. His answer to question 2 affirms some form of a Trinity. About this, John should have questioned the Indian more closely. His belief God created man "out of the ground" is as perfect as the Book of Genesis. The fifth query elicited ignorance, based on Paustoobee's never having seen God—a form of knowing with some support in I John 4:20. Paustoobee's strong conviction of God's providential care wavers before the present multiplication of foes: God can save them but he is not sure He will.⁶⁹ The aborigine's reply to question 14 is in the vein of Paul's exhortation, "Pray without ceasing," in I Thessalonians 5:17. Upon immortality and the hereafter, the Chickasaws had a certain belief from which the chief himself varied in Wesley's direction. John's statement of a part of New Testament eschatology in Indianese is not too inadequate: at least, its two classes of souls and their assemblage at two different areas were radically away from Chickasaw ideas.

In question 17, John came nearest he ever did to work among the Indians in hinting he could tell them of the Bible's teaching about the "Beloved Ones"—that is, the "One" and the "Two with Him" of question 2. Wars shut this door. "We have no time now but to fight," said Paustoobee. "If we should ever be at peace, we should be glad to know."

The Indian's reply to Wesley's final question is a significant pronouncement. John asked, "How came your nation by the knowledge you have?" John heard: "As soon as ever the ground was sound and fit to stand upon, it came to us, and has been with us ever since. . . ." Paustoobee's first sentence is quite true to both Genesis and Hebrews 1:1. His characterization of the young as ignorant meets the approval of the Book of Proverbs. His joining learning and practice is in agreement with Jesus' word of John 7:17. His deference to age and its wisdom is as frank, blunt and discriminating as that of young Elihu in Job 32:4-9.

Paustoobee's affirming the "beloved one" chooses a child, continues in him, cares for him and teaches him is the pattern of Jeremiah's account of his own case in Chapter 1:4-9; is as Christian as that prophet's indwelling spirit, Chapter 31:31-34; as the Holy Spirit as Teacher, John 14:26; as Paul's indwelling Christ, Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:3-4; and as Christ's principle of knowing, in John 7:17.

Wonder at the completeness of this declaration of divine ways of

communicating knowledge of heavenly things is mitigated by a temptation to suspect Paustoobee of wider and deeper acquaintance of the Scriptures than usual. Even so, the aborigine was quite abreast of the Oxford seeker. Apropos of this, one wonders also how much Wesley realized how little he had to offer these Indians. Again, the Indian's delineating the divine mode of communicating heavenly things as beginning with the selection of a child, whom He fosters, raises the query: did not John recall a consciousness of himself as so selected? From the time of his rescue from the burning rectory, there settled upon his mother and, doubtless, made some impression upon himself through her especial care of him, some sense of his being destined.

On this interview, certain remarks should be made. The first is that, since John wished to check his own beliefs with the supposedly superior or confirming knowledge of the unpolished red man, it is likely his questions compose the gist of what he wished to have confirmed. The marvel is their paucity. He asked nothing about the Scriptures, sin, righteousness, forgiveness, faith, love of others, peace of soul. Second, he did not ask anything about Christ. At Athens, Paul did better with his brief two-word allusion—"That man." Third, whatever Wesley received from the Indian, he did not get a whit of what he most needed: the knowledge that a man is justified only and alone by faith in what God in Christ has done adequately, once and for all time and all men. Paustoobee is not to blame for this huge hiatus. As questioner, John knew too little of it to ask any question about it. Fourth, Wesley was not dejected or disappointed in this inter- to James Vernon, President of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Colony, where he wrote of the Chicasaws: "The generality of that despised and almost unheard-of nation, if one may judge from the accounts given either by their own countrymen or strangers, are not only humble and peaceful qualities, scarce to be found among any other of the Indian nations, but have so firm a reliance on Providence, so settled a habit of looking up to a Superior Being in all the occurrences of life, that they appear the most likely of all the Americans to receive and rejoice in the glorious Gospel of Christ."⁷⁰ Finally, this is the last recorded and important interview with any Indians upon the subject of religion. Such an event was not Wesley's choice. November 23rd of this year, his *Journal* records a rather sharp interchange between himself and Oglethorpe upon the subject of Wesley's centering on his primary mission in Georgia—the Indians.⁷¹ Due partly to the war

disturbances amongst the Indians, but mostly to his inability to deny "the importunate request of the more serious parishioners to watch over their souls" until a successor to him came, he did not go to them.

Done with Indians, Wesley's experience brings him in touch with Negroes. It occurred by this circumstance. Sick, in constant danger of his life, failing in his ministry there, Charles Wesley, without asking either Oglethorpe or his brother about it, left Frederica and arrived in Savannah on Sunday evening, May 16th. There, he remained until July 26th. Still the General's official secretary, he is to carry despatches to England. He and John leave for Charleston, arriving on the 31st. Sunday morning, they attended church. The rector, Reverend Alexander Garden, had Wesley preach. "I was glad," John writes, "to see several Negroes at church, one of whom told me she was there constantly, and that her old mistress (now dead) had many times instructed her in the Christian religion." Then John catechizes again. "I asked her what religion was. She said she could not tell. I asked if she knew what a soul was. She answered, 'No.' I said, 'Do not you know there is something in you different from your body? Something you cannot see or feel?' She replied, 'I never heard so much before.' I added, 'Do you think, then, a man dies altogether as a horse dies?' She said, 'Yes, to be sure.'" His end to this record is, "O God, where are Thy tender mercies? Are they not over all thy works? When shall the sun of righteousness arise on these outcasts of men, with healing in his wings!"

August 2nd, having letters of Oglethorpe's to deliver to the Lieutenant-Governor thirty miles from Charleston, John did so. On return, he planned to visit the plantation of a Mr. Skeene, who had "about fifty Negroes," but a tired horse forced him to take the shortest road to Charleston.

Charles Wesley's return to England removed pastoral labor at Frederica, and John became responsible for it. August 10th, he was in Savannah, where he found Oglethorpe had gone to Frederica. Having letters from Carolina's Lieutenant-Governor for the General, he delivered the letters, and found him "open and friendly" towards Wesley himself.

Then trouble mounts. He called on Mrs. Hawkins, the wife of the settlement's doctor, but reports, "I was not as before"—that is, he was under duress and by one whom he had befriended and defended all

during the voyage and afterward, thereby incurring the criticism, opposition and warning of the quartet, the Moravians and others. At evening, he was told Mr. Francis Moore, Oglethorpe's trading merchant there, and his friends were "very angry" at him. On the 16th, he became ill: "at home, shook, headache, sweat"—so he characterized it. Capping all, on the 22nd, Mrs. Hawkins viciously assaulted him, probably intending to kill him. Apparently, he had decided to say naught about it, but the other party so told it abroad that the next day it was known to "every family." He wrote Oglethorpe for redress: "Though I have given my reputation to God, I must not absolutely neglect it. The treatment I have met with was not barely an assault: you know one part of it was felony. I can't see what I can do but desire an open hearing in the face of all my countrymen in this place. If you (to whom I can gladly trust my life and my all in this land) are excepted against as partial, let a jury be empanelled, and upon full inquiry determine what such breaches of the law deserve."

This letter was written at 6 A. M. Oglethorpe that morning sent twice for him. The second time, both Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins being present, he attempted a reconciliation, whose result Wesley expressed thus: "Alas!" The General had Mr. Horton act as adjudicator and he appeared to be successful. At 1 P. M., he again threshed the matter with John; and again at 8 P. M., both Dr. and Mrs. Hawkins being there. John's report of the result was: "For above an hour was he labouring to reconcile us. No, I had obliged them beyond all reconciliation. The wrongs I had done might be forgiven (for indeed they were none at all); but my friendship never can till the day of their death. However, something like an agreement was patched up, one article of which was that we should speak to each other no more. Blessed be God who hath at length given me a full discharge, in the sight of men and angels, from all intercourse with one 'whose heart is snares and knots and her hands as bands.'" ⁷²

Little marvel is there, therefore, that the Wesleys' labors at Frederica were failures. On the day of his arrival, John felt this: "From that time I had less and less prospect of doing good at Frederica." He doggedly persisted until January 26, 1737. Then "at noon I took my final leave of Frederica."

September 2nd, he leaves Frederica and arrives at Savannah on the 6th. Even with Frederica becoming less and less a field of his concern, the work was mounting rapidly. To it was added a real

and strong urge to labor among the Chickasaws: "Mr. Ingham has made some progress in the Creek language, but a short conversation I had with the chief of the Chickasaws moves me to desire rather to learn their language, if God shall give me opportunity."⁷³ Sick visitation, visitation of all his Savannah parishioners, mounting mortality, with its consequence of more and more orphans for whom Wesley made his parsonage practically an orphanage,⁷⁴ and the people of the other settlements were constituting a task "too weighty" for even John Wesley: "A parish of above two hundred miles in length laughs at the labours of one man."⁷⁵ This stocktaking, John entered in his *Journal* for Friday, September 10, 1736.

Now ensues a bit of Divine Providence in a dramatic episode of sober history. It is a repetition of Paul planting, Apollos watering, and God giving the increase. Involved are John Wesley and George Whitefield.

Recall that Whitefield had entered Oxford in the "late fall"⁷⁶ of 1732; had longed to join the Holy Club; and had received from Charles Wesley a copy of Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. It began in his sensitive nature a profound, agonized upheaval. The severe practices of his quest broke his health and sent him home to Bristol until March, 1736, when he returned. The following May ("about seven weeks after Easter" is his dating), he came into his experience of conversion: "Oh! with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of, and big with glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my desolate soul! Surely it was the day of my espousals—a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would I could not avoid singing of psalms almost aloud; afterwards they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."⁷⁷

Such was the experience of George Whitefield. He was the first of the Methodist Big Three to come into a conversion experience. Two years remain yet before, also in May, Charles and John Wesley will come into theirs. Since the Wesleys are in Georgia, and since Whitefield had been a member of the Holy Club, he now took charge of that group and of its work. Soon he was preaching. Ordained June 20th, on the 27th he preached his first sermon in his native Bristol in Gloucestershire. His success was immediate. Returning to Oxford, he

resumed his work and graduated in July. August and September, he was in London preaching with widening success to increasing numbers of folk.

These same months are, across the Atlantic in Georgia, the ones in which Charles Wesley is leaving for England; and John, ill in health, is wrestling with Frederica and the rest of his large parish. Keeping touch by letters with England, the Wesleys knew of the experience and work of Whitefield. They regard him and others of the Holy Club as possible helpers in the widening work in the New World. They wrote him about coming over to Georgia.

That Charles Wesley did so write Whitefield is seen in his later poetic letter to him:

In a strange land I stood,
And beckoned thee to cross th' Atlantic flood.
With true affection wing'd, thy ready mind
Left country, fame, and ease, and friends behind;
And eager all Heaven's counsels to explore,
Flew through the watery world, and grasp'd the shore.⁷⁸

John, however, threw out the challenge, detailed and rugged, in a letter to Whitefield and the Holy Club. Written September 10th, it is a replica, or vice versa, of John's *Journal* entry for this day. Having sketched the need, Wesley continues:

"What a single man can do is neither seen nor felt. Where are ye who are very zealous for the Lord of Hosts? Who will rise up with me against the wicked? Who will take God's part against the evil-doers? Whose spirit is moved within him to prepare himself for publishing glad tidings to those on whom the Sun of Righteousness never yet arose, by labouring first for those his countrymen who are else without hope as well as without God in the world? Do you ask what you shall have? Why, all you desire: food to eat, raiment to put on, a place where to lay your head (such as your Lord had not), and a crown of life that fadeth not away! Do you seek means of building up yourselves in the knowledge and love of God? I know of no place under heaven where there are more, or perhaps so many, as in this place. Does your heart burn within you to turn many others to righteousness? Behold the whole land, thousands of thousands are before you! I will resign to any of you all or any part of my charge. Choose what seemeth good in your own eyes. Here are within these walls children of all ages and dispositions. Who will bring them up

in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, till they are meet to be preachers of righteousness? Here are adults from the farthest parts of Europe and Asia and the inmost kingdoms of Africa; add to these the known and unknown nations of this vast continent, and you will indeed have a great multitude which no man can number.

"Only Mr. Delamotte is with me, till God shall stir up the hearts of some of His servants, who, putting their lives in His hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is so great and the labourers so few. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?"⁷⁹

Upon reading this letter,⁸⁰ Whitefield said: "My heart leaped within me, and, as it were, echoed to the call. I at length resolved within myself to embark for Georgia." Preaching and gathering funds for his work kept him in England until early in 1738. He having left Georgia abruptly and unannounced, as will be seen below, John Wesley's ship and that of Whitefield, neither knowing this fact, passed each other in the English Channel off Beachy Head or along the Downs during the night of January 31 and February 1, 1738.

Dramatic with the true drama of solid history as the passing of these ships is, yet drama is surpassed by fact: in point of time, each was sailing towards dawn; in point of calendar, sailing towards a new day; in point of geography, sailing towards different continents; and, in point of lifework, sailing towards his field of wide and enduring service.

Though Wesley's so-called "failure" in the New World is over-estimated, it is true he himself was not a significant success there. However, it is to his credit that he visioned some degree of the possibilities of the field and sensed Whitefield was the man for the place. At least, John Wesley challenged no man to come to America as he did Whitefield.

And he was right. George Whitefield's great lifework was not done in England but up and down the New World's Atlantic seaboard from Florida to New Hampshire. He crossed the ocean thirteen times, dying at Newburyport, Massachusetts, on September 30, 1770, where his body is buried. His preaching stirred the New World,⁸¹ attracting crowds of thousands. His philanthropies elicited large support from both England and America. It was he who opened an Orphan House in Georgia. In the hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, built especially for his preaching, there was begun later, by specific stipulation of its trustees and by Whitefield's approval, the school which under the leadership of Benjamin Franklin became the University of Pennsylvania.⁸² On its campus, there stands today his statue.

His purchase of 5,000 acres of land in the present Northampton County,⁸³ Pennsylvania for the site of a school for Negroes,⁸⁴ which site he named Nazareth, drew thither the same Moravians in 1740. Some of these bought Whitefield's holding, finishing the building he projected: others purchased 500 acres on the Lehigh River and founded Bethlehem. These Bethlehem Moravians did considerable work among the Indians. In thus bringing Whitefield to the New World, Wesley was his Barnabas.⁸⁵

Again, Whitefield was Barnabas to Wesley. Wesley's success was in the British Isles, first and most.⁸⁶ It occurred thus. Whitefield's conversion antedated Wesley's. It was he whose fervent preaching and zealous spirit began the tide of religious stirring in England, especially in the London and Bristol areas. Not only this stirring did Whitefield begin, but, after Wesley himself was converted, Whitefield brought Wesley to Bristol, where he was forced by the needs of conditions—that is, the crowds who came to hear Whitefield—to preach in the fields. From this new mode of serving, John shrank almost in horror, but went; preached in the open; saw the attendant success; and was driven thereby far upon his road to his freer modes of work. Forms became subservient to souls but were never discarded. It was Whitefield who put John's feet into these paths. And after May, 1738, Wesley was ready to walk them.

The Lord might move in mysterious ways, but He moves!

Time moves on, and so also does Wesley's life in these autumn days of 1736. He is busy as always. Oglethorpe is given many of his hours. Von Reck is living in his home, and John takes the afforded opportunity to perfect his German. He is often with Miss Sophy: and Miss Bovey of whom he wrote—"the one woman in America whom I have found without guile"⁸⁷—an agreeable relief after the Mrs. Hawkins affair. He cares for his garden and fells trees. Compiling a book of psalms and hymns,⁸⁸ he plays over on his flute⁸⁹ tunes from the Moravian hymnal. Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Church history and canon law, he is teaching.⁹⁰ Frederica is visited again on October 16th. What he found, he so records in his *Diary*: "In trouble, alas! in trouble. Ah, my Frederica!" However, he begins again: "In deep distress he sits down for a quarter of an hour, sends Mark [Hird] to gather a company, sleeps in peace for half an hour, rises, dresses in full canonicals, and, with a congregation of nine souls, reads prayers

and expounds." Then he begins a house-to-house visitation.⁹¹ On the 25th, he and Miss Sophy return to Savannah.

During this fall, three matters bear upon Wesley's quest. The first occurs on September 20th. "We ended the *Apostolical Canons*, of which I must confess I once thought more highly than I ought to think." Recall his turning to these at Oxford after John Clayton joined the Holy Club. Then John accorded them an authority equal to that of the Bible. Now he has changed that estimate and admits its error. Again the Bible is first and final authority.

The second occurred on October 23–25, when he majored upon the writings of the mystics. Thursday the 23rd, he "wrote on the mystics." The following two days, he spent six hours each day on that subject. On the 26th, he returned to the *Apostolical Canons* for his major morning study.

These studies of mysticism led to the thing related to his quest, taking place on November 23rd. On this date, he wrote to his brother Samuel his résumé—a "short scheme," he called it—of mysticism. It is the first main stroke in his struggle to clear himself of the sinister undertow of the treacherous seas of mysticism. Since this is, upon the negative side, the most significant experience in John Wesley's religious quest, which, therefore, must be presented amply, it will be so presented in the next chapter.

The third is the translation of some German hymns, two of which had the most pertinent message John Wesley at the time needed to know. The one is by Johann A. Rothe:

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain:
The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away.

Father, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far:
Thy heart still melts with tenderness;
Thine arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste and live.

O love, thou bottomless abyss!
 My sins are swallow'd up in thee;
 Cover'd is my unrighteousness,
 Nor spot of guilt remains on me:
 While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
 Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

By faith I plunge me in this sea;
 Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;
 Hither, when hell assails, I flee;
 I look into my Saviour's breast:
 Away, sad doubt and anxious fear!
 Mercy is all that's written there.⁹²

The other hymn is one by Christian F. Richter:

My soul before thee prostrate lies;
 To thee, her source, my spirit flies;
 My wants I mourn, my chains I see;
 O let thy presence set me free.

Jesus, vouchsafe my heart and will
 With Thy meek lowliness to fill;
 No more her power let nature boast,
 But in thy will may mine be lost.

Already springing hope I feel,
 God will destroy the power of hell,
 And, from a land of wars and pain,
 Lead me where peace and safety reign.

One only care my soul shall know—
 Father, all thy commands to do;
 And feel, what endless years shall prove,
 That thou, my Lord, my God, art love.⁹³

While these translations of Wesley's lack the crispness, spontaneity and vigor of their original German, they present such an ample array of the primary Gospel truths which John Wesley, as well as every other person, now most needed to know, that the wonder is he did

not at once accept them, trust them, allow them to work and bring him to the goal of his quest six days short of two and a half years earlier. The reason for this might be the heavy intellectual phase of Wesley's personality. Unlike the leaping temper of his brother, John was more like Tennyson's scientist: "Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point."⁹⁴ Just as the two-century sifting of the New Testament through the Greek mind is a guarantee of the sturdy stamina of its contents, so a resifting of those contents by a mind such as was Wesley's is an attestation of their validity. The power of a warrior can be measured by the strength of the opponents he overcomes: likewise, the power of the Gospel can be measured by the strength of its defeated foes. If anything is clear in the history of Wesley's quest in Georgia, it is this: that profound changes in him are being made. Shipboard contacts, Spangenberg's searching questions, discovery of the Indians as they were, these hymns, whose translating he is now enough skilled in German to do creditably—these are forming the seeker into the finder. These years, Wesley has given time every day to Christian song, singing by himself and with one or more persons. Oft did he sing with the Germans and the Moravians. With these last, he certainly sang in German these two hymns; and in his own English translation with others. That he put them into English avers his convinced estimate of their high quality as Christian literature and as Gospel truth. Perhaps he is unable, at least he is not saying yet, "Now I have found the ground wherein sure my soul's anchor may remain," but he knows there is such ground and has seen it proven by his Moravian co-settlers. 'Neath his soul's soil, the seed sprouts. He is not referring correctly the line, "My soul before thee prostrate lies," but he will come to it; and, when later Peter Böhler will bring him Moravian brethren to testify to actual, assured experience of the pardon of sin through faith, simple and alone, in the Crucified Saviour, they will sing this hymn to thus prostrated Seeker Wesley.

Settlement and trouble periods, with the course of John Wesley's religious quest amidst them, have been seen. The period of departure, its preludes and its fact, remains of the time in Georgia. It falls into the year 1737.

The old year 1736 ends with his usual busy routine of daily schedule, with certain variations. All through December, he made notes of the weather, a variant in his *Diary*. Also, he now, in writing that *Diary*, discarded his own code and began the use of the shorthand system

of John Byrom, the poet and Wesley's friend.⁹⁵ Studies, languages, readings continue. Hymns receive large attention. He is using Freylinghausen's *Gesang-Buch*; conceives a "Scheme for Psalms" and a "Scheme for Hymns." His *Diary* for December 19th refers to these schemes or plans six times. The next day, he is working on the hymns from 7 A. M. to noon. This labor, he continues till the 22nd, at 10:30 A. M. The remainder of this day saw him and Delamotte set out to walk to Cowpen; get lost in a cypress swamp; select a dry spot, where, unable to make a fire because their tinder was wet, they lay down in wet clothes which a "sharp frost" made "as hard as the tree we lay against"; and John himself "slept till six in the morning."

Christmas Day received no special attention. On the 28th, he, Delamotte and a guide left by horse for Frederica. December 31st was spent thus: "After riding through the woods between thirty and forty miles, we made a good fire, and cheerfully ended the old year." New Year's found them in the woods. New Year's dinner was a "little barbecued bear's flesh (that is, dried in the sun), we boiled it, and found it very wholesome food."

From Thursday, February 3, 1737, on to March 4th, all else is overlaid by the question as to whether or not John Wesley would marry Sophia Hopkey.⁹⁶ He was thirty-five years of age; she, nineteen. It was the second or third of Wesley's four or five romances.⁹⁷ For Wesley writers, there is a strong appeal in this phase of his Georgia residence: some of these are detractors; others, defenders. Much can be written upon this subject, which, highly interesting though it be, is not pertinent here. What is pertinent here is its relation to John Wesley's religious quest. Such a relation exists.

It exists in this way. There can be no doubt that John Wesley was in love with Sophia Hopkey. Likewise, there can be no doubt that she was in love with him. Moreover, with the exception of his feeling towards Mary Pendarves, the deepest and strongest of his attachments romantically was with Sophia Hopkey. Neither can doubt be held that Wesley wanted to marry Sophy. While circumstances⁹⁸ might have affected her love for him, it is clear that she would have married him.

Two testimonies to Wesley's strong affection for Sophy and his powerful desire to marry her exist.

His *Diary* for March 9th, two days before she and Williamson were married, when Wesley saw both together and Sophy alone, contains these expressions: "Confounded! . . . Could not pray! . . . Tried to pray, lost, sunk! . . . No such day since I first saw the sun! O deal

tenderly with thy servant! Let me not see such another!" His *Journal* expands these ejaculations thus: "I came home and went into my garden. I walked up and down, seeking rest but finding none. From the beginning of my life to this hour I had not known one such as this. God let loose my inordinate affection upon me, and the poison therefor drank up my spirit. I was as stupid as if half awake, and yet in the sharpest pain I ever felt. To see her no more: that thought was as the piercings of a sword; It was not to be born, nor shaken off. I was weary of the world, of life, of life."⁹⁹

The other testimony is as follows. At a certain service of worship, held during or soon after Sophy's marriage to Mr. Williamson, John Wesley began reading the Old Testament lesson for the day. It contained Ezekiel, chapter twenty-four, verses 15-18: "Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded." These words so startled him that, for a little, he ceased reading.¹⁰⁰ The impress of this text remained with him all his life.

By these data, it is clear that John Wesley has fought through the most severe personal relation of his life. Just here, many are they who pass their judgment upon his decision. This is interesting but neither of major importance nor pertinent to his quest. That quest raises the question, this experience, well-nigh overwhelming in its power, was overcome by something stronger: what was that more potent something? The plain and only answer is: his conviction it was the will of God he should "live a single life."

Recall that, in the Holy Club, John Clayton had supported staunchly High Church ways, among them celibacy or unmarried clergy.¹⁰¹ John Wesley became convinced he should remain single. How and when is not known, though it might be the reason why he turned from Betty Kirkham and Mary Pendarves. If so, which is very likely, he came to it early in his university years. He was of that mind on October 25, 1736, saying, "I still felt in myself the same desire and design to live a single life." He is about to return to Savannah from Frederica with Sophy in his boat, because Oglethorpe so insisted.¹⁰²

In this arrangement, John "saw the danger" to himself but "had a good hope" of remaining single, partly for the reason just recorded and partly because Sophy herself had "resolved to live single." The inference is, that, if Sophy changed her resolution, John could not keep his. God's will and John's were brought into their most decisive conflict by Sophy. The tug and counter-tug continued until March 4, 1737. That day, the final decision was made. The evening before, he and Delamotte had visited Sophy.

"After we came from her," John writes, "Mr. Delamotte was deeply concerned. I had never seen him in such uneasiness before. He said, with many tears, 'He found we must part, for he could not live in that house when I was married to Miss Sophy.' I told him, 'I had no intention to marry her.' He said, 'I did not know my own heart; but he saw clearly it would come to that very soon, unless I broke off all intercourse with her.' I told him, 'This was a point of great importance, and therefore not to be determined suddenly.' He said, 'I ought to determine as soon as possible; for I was losing ground daily.' I felt what he said to be true, and therefore easily consented to set aside the next day for that purpose.

"Having both of us sought God by deep consideration, fasting, and prayer, in the afternoon we conferred together, but could not come to any decision. We both apprehended Mr. Ingham's objection to be the strongest, the doubt whether she was what she appeared. But this doubt was too hard for us to solve. At length we agreed to appeal to the Searcher of hearts. I accordingly made three lots. In one was writ 'Marry'; in the second, 'Think not of it this year.' After we had prayed to God to 'give a perfect lot,' Mr. Delamotte drew the third, in which were these words, 'Think of it no more.' Instead of the agony I had reason to expect, I was enabled to say cheerfully, 'Thy will be done.' We cast lots once again to know whether I ought to converse with her any more; and the direction I received from God was, 'Only in presence of Mr. Delamotte.'

"I saw and adored the goodness of God, though what He required of me was a costly sacrifice. It was indeed the giving up at once whatever this world affords of agreeable—not only honour, fortune, power (which indeed were nothing to me, who despised them as the clay in the streets), but all the truly desirable conveniences of life—a pleasant house, a delightful garden, on the brow of a hill at a small distance from the town; another house and garden in the town; and a third a few miles off, with a large tract of fruitful land adjoining to it. And

above all, what to me made all things else vile and utterly beneath a thought, such a companion as I never expected to find again, should I live one thousand years twice told. So that I could not cry out: O Lord God, Thou God of my fathers, plenteous in mercy and truth, behold I give Thee, not thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil, but the desire of my eyes, the joy of my heart, the one thing upon earth which I longed for! O give me wisdom, which sitteth by Thy throne, and reject me not from among Thy children!"

Thus the question of living single or of marrying Sophy was answered. Whether we agree or not is of no consequence. The main point is that John Wesley's present quest and future work, "as God's will," conquered. John Wesley has joined the company of those who "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."¹⁰³

Life's poetry ends: its prose begins. Having been accused of embezzling the goods of the colony's trustees, on this March 4th, John wrote to them, demanding to know who his accuser was and sending in his and Delamotte's expense account from March 1, 1736, to March 1, 1737. It amounted to "£44 4s. 4d."

March 7th, he is convinced his refusal of marriage was right. On the morning of this day, he and Mr. Causton walked four miles to a piece of ground belonging to the latter. There they began felling trees. To the rhythmic chick-chock of his ax—the crack, and swish and thump and quiet of the falling trees, John, reflecting upon his recent momentous decision, wrote: "I plainly felt, that had God given me such a retirement, with the companion I desired, I should have forgot the work for which I was born, and have set up my rest in this world."¹⁰⁴ His final assay of the Sophy experience is here. It uncovers the deepest depth of his living—his sense of a specific destiny under God. Here is bared the spring, the guide, the enduring motive and the final authority in his life. Hence, it is clear that his quest, with all its ignorance, fluctuation, illogicity, and opposition, is underlaid by an unbreakable fidelity to God. Here is his "Thy Will Be Done."

His "Rise, let us be going"¹⁰⁵ will soon come.

A weighty and enduring addition to the results of Wesley's quest is made in April. It came by way of an unlikely train of circumstances.

This 1737, Holy Week—"this great and holy week," John called it—began on the 3rd. Soon after Easter Sunday, Wesley left Savannah on April 12th for Charleston "to put a stop to the proceedings of one in Carolina, who had married several of my parishioners without either banns or license" and who asserted "he would do so still."

He informed Mr. Garden, the Bishop of London's Commissary in Carolina, of these irregularities and received his promise to end them.

This clerical official, asking Wesley to preach the following Sunday, he did so "on those words of the epistle of the day, 'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.'" ¹⁰⁶ The preacher characterized his sermon as "a plain account of the Christian state." What one of his auditors, "a man of education and character," thought of it appears in this explosive remark, "Why, if this be Christianity, a Christian must have more courage than Alexander the Great."

The chain of circumstances adds another link. Business attended to and sermon preached, on Tuesday John embarked for Savannah. Contrary winds and an anchor's loss drove the ship far out to sea, so far that it was with difficulty it returned to Charleston harbor on Thursday. That this doubling of Paul's "a night and a day I have been in the deep," eventuated in the leading of Wesley in his quest appears on Friday, April 22nd. The only hope he had of help for himself in the New World was the American Indian. Aid unexpected came through layfolk and ministry of the Moravian emigrants: and now aid, equally unexpected, came from his own profession, ministers; and those of his own Church.

Friday the 22nd was the day for the "annual visitation" of the Anglican clergy of South Carolina. What in it smote John was the afternoon program: "In the afternoon, there was such a conversation for several hours on 'Christ our Righteousness' as I had not heard at any visitation in England, or hardly on any other occasion." John was an attentive, thirsty, absorbing, and retentive listener: it can be said fairly, he was a bit raptured: certainly, he was very agreeably surprised.

From this meeting and discussion of an integral New Testament doctrine, what did this whilom hearer derive for his quest? Twenty-eight years afterward, on November 24, 1765, "at the chapel in West-street, Seven Dials" in London, he preached on the theme, "The Lord our Righteousness." His text was Jeremiah 23:6, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." In his sermon, he said this of its doctrine, "And this is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught for near eight and twenty years." Therefore, since he declares he heard no such discussion up to this time; and since he testifies he came to his doctrine of it in late 1737 or early 1738, it is certain that he must have gotten the outlines of it from those ministers. It is necessary, therefore, to note the outline of his

understanding of this doctrine and to estimate its meaning for his quest.

The pertinent points of that sermon are these:

1. The righteousness of Christ is twofold: divine and human. "His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature . . . the supreme, the eternal; 'equal with the Father, as touching his Godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching his manhood.' Now this is his eternal, essential, immutable holiness; His infinite justice, mercy and truth; in all which, He and the Father are one."

His human righteousness "belongs to him in his human nature; as he is the 'Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.'" This is either internal or external. His internal human righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness." Negatively, this external righteousness meant "He did nothing amiss": positively, it meant "He did all things well. . . . In the whole course of His life he did the will of God on earth, as the angels do it in heaven. All He acted and spoke was exactly right in any circumstance. The whole and every part of His obedience was complete." This "doing" composed his "active righteousness."

Christ's "passive righteousness" was every obedience which entailed suffering. Christ suffered the "whole will of God, from the time He came into the world, till 'He bare our sins in His body on the tree'; yea, till having made a full atonement for them, 'He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.'"

2. "When is it that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us?" All men are believers or unbelievers: to the latter, the righteousness of Christ is not imputed; but "to all believers the righteousness of Christ is imputed. . . . It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes: faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. For if he believes according to the Scripture, he believes in the righteousness of Christ. There is no true faith, that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness of Christ for its object."

3. "In what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: All believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of any-

thing in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. . . . We are 'justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. And this is not only the means of our obtaining the favour of God but of our continuing therein. It is thus we come to God at first; it is by the same we come unto Him ever after. We walk in one and the same new and living way, till our spirit returns to God. And this is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught for near eight and twenty years,' " John wrote.

He repeats: "We must be cut off from dependence upon ourselves, before we can truly depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in His. Till we are delivered from trusting in anything that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what He has done and suffered."

He follows the theme through historically. First, he quoted from the "homilies of our church": "These things must necessarily go together in our justification; upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice; and on our part, faith in the merits of Christ. So that the grace of God doth not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, as to deserving our justification." Next, he quotes a stanza of his translation, made in 1740, of a hymn of the Moravian, Count Zinzendorf:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

And he quotes from his sermon on "Justification," published in 1746 and in 1757; and from his *Treatise on Justification*, printed in 1764.

One wonders whether or not those Anglican ministers at Charleston ever realized, or were told, or were thanked for what their discussion did for a troubled seeker after God both that day and for over half a century in the future. That future will see him preaching often from the text of I Corinthians 1:30. The near future will disclose his ever closer approach to this righteousness and his experience of it.

For the present, that meeting most likely gave John Wesley a vision of a present righteousness of whose existence he had read but never

grasped and of whose vital relation to himself and his quest he had not dreamed. Hitherto, in his quest, he has been conscious of seeking, stressing, and trusting in a righteousness, a holiness, inward and outward, which was his own achievement. This Charleston discussion drew his attention (for the first time, according to his own words) to the fact that the New Testament taught the only first righteousness in God's sight for a sinner was not man's but Christ's: His, not John Wesley's. This has the character of the ethical, to which John had been giving major and mounting attention: but it is separated from man and is attached to the Divine; is not achieved by man's efforts but is received through God's grace. That Friday, April 22, 1737, Wesley's quest made a long stride forward.

The period of John Wesley's troubles in Georgia now intensifies itself, culminating in his last period—that of his leaving for England. It begins March 4, 1737, and ends the December 2 following. The immediate cause of his departure is his decision not to marry Sophia Hopkey, and its aftermath. Inasmuch as one easily obtains from Wesley literature the impression that his Georgia work was a complete and a rather disgraceful failure; that for this he was responsible; and that the immediate cause of his leaving had no bearings upon his personal religious quest, it is but just to observe certain corrective facts.

Note first, then, that John Wesley's ministry in Georgia, instead of petering out in 1737, was showing plain advances. As far back as November, 1736, when it was known his wish to preach to the Indians came forward again, it was the pleading of Savannah parishioners which detained him: he wrote, the obligation of "love I could not break through: I could not resist the importunate request of the more serious parishioners, 'to watch over their souls yet a little longer, till someone came who might supply my place.'"¹⁰⁷

April 29, 1737, brought his religious statesmanship into concrete plan. Wherever he went, John evidenced all his life a discerning awareness of whom and of what was about him. Examples are his Indian contacts, two of which have been presented in required detail. To Negroes he likewise gave his attention. Few or none of them were in Georgia at this time; but on his South Carolina visits, he met them: July 31, 1736, he spoke to one of those in the church at Charleston; August 2nd, he wanted to visit a Mr. Skeene's plantation to see his reported "fifty Christian Negroes"; April 23, 1737, he spoke to a young Negro woman who had lived in a minister's family in Barbados;

four days later, at a Mr. Bellinger's plantation (named "Chulifinny"), a rainy day furnished him opportunity to talk with a Spanish-Indian half-breed and some Negroes "who were very desirous of instruction"; and a Negro lad of his host's who guided him to Purrysburg, he found "very desirous and very capable of instruction." From such contacts, he formed this plan:

Perhaps one of the easiest and shortest ways to instruct the American Negroes in Christianity, would be first to inquire after and find out some of the most serious of the planters. Then, having inquired of them, which of their slaves were best inclined and understood English, to go to them from plantation to plantation, staying as long as necessary at each. Three or four gentlemen of Carolina I have been with, that would be sincerely glad of such an assistant, who might pursue his work with no more hindrances than must everywhere attend the preaching of the Gospel.¹⁰⁸

Without realizing it fully, Wesley is sketching the general pattern of procedure he will follow later in England, and Whitefield will vary in America, as his project at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, shows.

Moreover, John's Savannah work was improving. July 30th, he said of his church life that he found his "little flock there in a better state than he could have expected." And a month later, May 29th, there was a dawning religious zeal among the children: "Indeed about this time we observed the Spirit of God to move upon the children. They began more carefully to attend to the things that were spoken both at home and at church, and a remarkable seriousness appeared in their whole behaviour and conversation." A specific evidence of this appeared on Whitsunday, when "four of our scholars, after having been instructed daily for several weeks, were, at their earnest and repeated desire, admitted to the Lord's table."

With these facts erasing some of the soilage of uninvestigated, traditional, and prejudiced judgment from one's mind, he is ready for the presentation of the relevant facts in the relation of John Wesley and Sophia Hopkey. These facts do not include a sketchy, much less a thorough, discussion of the right or wrong of either major character in it. Nor do they require a presentation of the spuriously legal phase of the episode. Nor need its romantic aspect be detailed. Perusal and study of the available, extant, and pertinent records of this story allows

one to understand readily their strong appeal to anyone interested in human affairs. For the present purpose, it is needful first only to list the focal facts of their romantic relation; and, next, to present the final, deep reason for Wesley's non-marriage with Miss Hopkey.

These are the basic facts:

Friday, February 6, 1736, John Wesley first set foot upon American soil. March 13th, he met Sophia Christina Hopkey, "a young lady of good sense, and elegant in person and manners." Their religious, cultural, and social contacts developed into romantic love, especially and strongly on Wesley's part. He was now thirty-three years of age; she, eighteen. It was his third romance. He was her third suitor. In time, certainly before February 6, 1737, they spoke of marrying. John hesitated until March 4th, when his decision to remain single was made. Yet he was reluctant to inform her of it. She waited till March 8th, when she engaged herself to Mr. Williamson, whom she married on March 12th.

John continued as her pastor. She became negligent of her religious duties. One of these was the requirement of church rule that all who expected to commune upon a given Sunday previously were to notify the minister of their intention. Sophy had been neglecting such notification. Of this, as they were walking from morning service on July 3rd, he spoke to her, at which she became "extremely angry"; said she "did not expect such usage from him"; and, at the next street corner, "went abruptly away." Though he had refused communion to others for like reasons, he did not discipline Mrs. Williamson yet. Consequently, there arose in his congregation accusations of partiality, which stung him. He resolved "to behave indifferently to all, rich or poor, friends or enemies." August 1st, he told Spangenberg of his determination and, asking his advice, took it. Thus, his *Journal* for the following Sunday reads, "Sunday, 7, I repelled Mrs. Williamson from the holy communion."

The next day, warrant for his arrest was issued; was served the following day; and opened the legal side of the case. It ran on to December 2nd. An apparently packed jury drew up twelve counts against John. Later, twelve of the jury showed the illegality of two, the indefiniteness of another, and the falsity of the others. Copies of these findings were given the court and the Georgia trustees. Besides attending to two hearings, acceding to personal interviews, John was present at court "seven sessions successively," insisting upon being heard. No opportunity was given him. Finally, seeing he was "now only

a prisoner at large," he put up in Savannah's "great square" on November 24th a public notice of his intention to return to England and, on December 2nd, he left "as soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock."

This experience composed one of the few deepest struggles of Wesley's life. It uncovers the deepest depth of his living, that is, obedience to the will of God. Thus is bared the spring, the guide, the ultimate authority in his life. From this surrender, he never will depart consciously. Hence, it is clear, that his quest, with all its ignorance, fluctuation, illogicity, opposition, is undergirded by a prime fidelity to God.

Just here, one must interrupt the narrative in order to present one of the most significant features of Wesley's quest: the beginning of his discard of mysticism. Since this began in America, it must be interposed here, and is given in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

"I THINK the rock on which I had the nearest made the shipwreck of faith was the writings of the mystics," John Wesley wrote from Georgia to his brother Samuel on November 23, 1736.¹ The sentence states the theme of this chapter, the power of mysticism's appeal to its writer, and his conquest of its well-nigh ruinous effects. To nothing else in his experience does he accord the power over him which he concedes to it. His decision concerning it was a victory for his unalloyed fidelity to the way of God: his discard of mysticism was the victory of his intelligent loyalty to the truth of the Gospel of Christ and its supreme authority as revelation. Naught else came so near bringing his quest to futility and himself to ruin as did mysticism. Therefore, it is well to give this battle a chapter by itself and to examine here this formidable foe of the Gospel and of Wesley. This can be done by observing how he came to be a mystic, and why he jettisoned mysticism as a faith.

Mysticism stresses solitude. It was this in it which appealed to John Wesley who, by his nature, was susceptible to solitude. Writing to John Liden in Sweden on November 30, 1769, his characterization of his childhood temper was, "having from infancy loved silence and obscurity."²

Very strongly the same it was at Oxford, as these letters disclose. In 1774, warning Mary Bishop of her tendency toward solitude, he wrote, "And the more the love of solitude is indulged, the more it will increase. In every age and country Satan has whispered to those who began to taste the powers of the world to come (as well as to Gregory Lopez), 'Au désert! Au désert!'"³ Most of our little flock at Oxford were tried with this, my brother and I in particular."⁴ Two years later, he repeats to twenty-three-year-old Elizabeth Ritchie, "Some time since, you certainly were in danger of exchanging the plain religion of the Bible for the refined one of mysticism, a danger which few can judge of but those that feel it. This my brother and I did for several years."⁵ Writing to Miss March in 1777, he admits, "When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how a busy man

could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world."⁶ This innate love of solitude never left him. November 15, 1781, when he was seventy-eight, he confided to one of his preachers, "It would be more pleasing to me to bury myself in silence and solitude."⁷ In view of these admissions, Ronald Knox's statement, "I confess I cherish the belief that there was in Wesley something of the mystic; that his bent, if Providence had not seen fit to order his career otherwise, was towards a solitary, contemplative life,"⁸ is a very modest one.

Just here, it is exceedingly important to mark carefully the Law which the Methodists accepted. It was the William Law before he became a mystic in 1732.⁹ The Law before 1732, the Methodists, especially as far as the Wesleys were concerned, never rejected; but the Law after 1732, the mystic Law, the two Wesleys and the Holy Club¹⁰ accepted for a while—John Wesley doing so for about four years—and thereafter rejecting him and mysticism, fighting it to the ends of their lives.

It will be fair to William Law and to the Wesleys to adduce some detail of this acceptance and rejection of mysticism: and, then, to present the reasons for the Wesleyan battle against mysticism.

Unbroken Methodist acceptance of Law included only his two pre-mystic books, *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Recall that, in his student days, John Wesley became acquainted with these books. Of the power they exerted upon him, he wrote in 1738, eleven years later, "I had objections to every page; but they both convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that everything appeared in a new view." And, along with vision, went act: "I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying Him as I had never done before."¹¹

By December 7, 1754, he had made an abridgment of the first chapter of Law's *Christian Perfection*, which he called "a short tract," entitling it *The Nature and Design of Christianity*.¹²

Writing from Londonderry, Ireland, May 14, 1765, to John Newton in London, answering an apparent question about the origin of his doctrine of Christian perfection, he said: "But how came this opinion into my mind? I will tell you with all simplicity. In 1725, I met with Bishop Taylor's *Rules of Holy Living and Dying*. I was struck particularly with the chapter upon intention, and felt a fixed intention to give myself up to God. In this I was much confirmed soon after by the

Christian pattern, and longed to give God all my heart. This is just what I mean by perfection now: I sought after it from that hour."¹³ What Taylor gave him was a purpose: what Law added was confirmation of that purpose and initiation of active quest for its fulfillment.

In Chapter Eight of his *Serious Call*, the "Christian Sister," as Gibbon called her, Law named "Miranda,"¹⁴ to whom Wesley often referred as an example of what he understood a real Christian to be. One such case was Elizabeth Ritchie. When preaching at Otley on June 30, 1772, he first met her. She was then nineteen years of age, and John Wesley was thirteen days¹⁵ over sixty-nine, but between them began, Telford tells, a "beautiful friendship, which enriched Wesley's life."¹⁶ Addressing her as "My Dear Betsey," on May 8, 1774, he said, "You are just rising into life; and I would fain have you not almost but altogether a Christian. I would have you such an one as Miranda."¹⁷ That she succeeded is attested by his exhortation to the head of a boarding school, "Make Christians, my dear Miss Bishop, make Christians! . . . Make such Christians as Miranda, as Miss Ritchie. . . ."¹⁸

By November, 1774, Miss Ritchie had met some of the writings of the French mystic Madame Guyon, concerning which she inquired of John Wesley. Replying, he admitted her works contained "many excellent things";¹⁹ warned her of their dangerous tendencies; and, for her reading, recommended the Old and New Testaments, his own writings, and, as "some of the most useful to believers, Mr. Law's tracts."²⁰ His placing Law's early writings in such company was high praise.

In 1787, the same reading trinity is commended to Ann Taylor of Sheffield: "Next the Bible, the books you might profit by would be Mr. Law's works and some of the Sermons."²¹

Then, eighteen months ere he died,²² referring to the simplicity of the Gospel, he said, "The same truth, that strong and elegant writer, Mr. Law, earnestly expresses in his *Serious Call to a Devout Life*: a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought."

Therefore, it is evident that, from 1727, when he first met Law's first two books, until 1789, or for sixty-two years, Wesley never rejected the pre-mystic William Law.

Moreover, Law strongly molded Wesley in other ways. In 1732, John visited Law at Putney.²³ In 1734, he asked Law's advice as to his mode of dealing with one of his students;²⁴ and, in 1735, he consulted Law²⁵ about the Georgia journey.

Law molded Wesley's early preaching. May 14, 1738, he wrote to Law, "For two years (more especially) I have been preaching after the model of your two practical treatises."²⁶ As to quoting Law in his preaching, in one sermon he used four paragraphs²⁷ and, in another, ten.²⁸ When the length of these quotes is measured by the fact that in his sermons, as printed, Wesley rarely quoted any writings except the Bible and the homilies of his Church, it is seen how high was his estimate of Law's first books.

There is truth, therefore, in Charles Wesley's naming William Law "Our John the Baptist,"²⁹ but not the accurate truth. Law did come upon England's religious scene before the Wesleys, but he did not herald them: Law heralded no one. To a degree, the Baptist knew what he was doing:³⁰ Law did not. Moreover, when Jesus came to John, He knew what He was beginning, but, when the Wesleys came to Law, they knew not what they would start. Again, though John wavered concerning Christ,³¹ Christ was steady concerning John: the Wesleys broke from the mystic Law but never forsook the pre-mystic Law. Once more: John the Baptist did not stir Jesus as Law stirred the Wesleys; it was Jesus who stirred John. The Wesleys did not move Law in their direction.³² Law led off for the Wesleys but turned aside from the trail: they pursued it and arrived.

An acknowledgment of Methodist debt to Law, John Wesley made in the 1780's,³³ in his sermon, "On God's Vineyard." The sermon is a sketch of Methodist doctrine, Scripture helps, discipline, and outward protection. Referring to the assertion of some "learned man,"³⁴ to the effect that, through his first two books, Law was the "parent" of the Methodists, John Wesley commented: "Although this was not entirely true, yet there was some truth in it. All the Methodists carefully read these books, and were greatly profited thereby. Yet they did by no mean spring from them, but from the Holy Scriptures. . . . They were one and all determined to be Bible Christians."³⁵ Hence, Law was more midwife or nurse than parent.

Having seen that all their lives the Wesleys fully accepted the pre-mystic William Law, it is needful to see now, that with equal constancy and completeness, they rejected William Law, the mystic, as well as the whole pattern of mysticism.

John Wesley's succinct statement of that rejection is, "The person I greatly reverence and love: the doctrine I utterly abhor, as I apprehend it to be totally subversive of the very essence of Christianity."³⁶ On January 6, 1756, John wrote this to Law himself. The first clause is

a truly Christian attitude: the second states Wesley's abhorrence of mysticism in general and of Law's mysticism in particular: the third voices his general reason for fighting mysticism.

Inasmuch as John and others had held certain mystics "in great veneration, as the best explainers of the Gospel of Christ,"⁸⁷ this abhorrence of mysticism is a radical, thorough alteration of that estimate. The beginnings of this change were certain experiences.

1. In England, Wesley's first contact with a quasi-mystic was with the person he named a "contemplative man," whose counsel, he soon saw, was but another form of salvation by one's own works. In this evaluation, without realizing it fully, he phrased one of the major flaws of mysticism.

2. It was during his Georgia visit that he became adequately aware of the nature of mysticism and of its power over him, for it was here he read the life of Böhme.⁸⁸ Perhaps, when in 1735 he consulted Law about the Georgia venture, Law gave him or commended to him the work of Böhme. However this might be, it is sure that, in America, John wrestled with mysticism. Though this undercurrent of his Georgia life was either unseen or not understood by most of the colonists, its result is evident: he came to see clearly the implacable hostility of mysticism to the Christian faith.

3. Since mysticism's stress upon solitude appealed so strongly to John's native disposition, it is important to note it was exactly at this point that he began to depart from it. Writing, on December 10, 1777, to Miss March of her danger in thinking her busy Christian life was hostile to her inner peace of spirit, and in her proposing to discontinue it for a quiet life, he warned her of her danger by citing his like feeling when in America: "I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life. But it was no hindrance to silence of spirit."⁸⁹ It is evident, therefore, that, in 1736-37, he was not only seeing but also was experiencing the mystic's error in teaching solitude as necessary to inner peace. He was knowing something of the peace that passeth understanding.

4. In this regard, one must note again the influence of the Moravians. Their calm during the storms of the voyage to America was, to John, a surprising demonstration of a pervading peace which had no connection with mystic solitude.

Spangenberg's influence upon John Wesley discloses a negative aspect

at this point. At their first meeting, Spangenberg was quite purely evangelical. What he said about one's personal and knowable experience of God in Christ was not that of an indefinite fusion of one's soul with God but was the fellowship of an individual person with the Supreme Person, in which each is alike and distinct. In experiencing this, mystic practice had no place. The agent was faith alone in Christ alone. This was Spangenberg's enduring and positive service to Wesley.

His negative service was his mysticism. Friday, February 27, 1736, the *Diary* reads: "He and Spangenberg discussed 'mystical divinity,' his friend acknowledging himself a mystic." The next day, John, Delamotte, Bishop Nitschmann, Andrew Döber and Anton Seifart had a conversation "on the mystics." What immediate influence these had on Wesley is not stated. That their enduring power was negative is evident in the fact that in the ensuing November he had come to see the subtle evil of mysticism and to begin to fight it.

Whatever be the means by which it came, while in Georgia John Wesley arrived at the understanding that what the later Law and others of like mind gave him was a hidden and treacherous rock which almost wrecked his Christian Faith. Therefore, his first militant pronouncement upon mysticism was written from Georgia to his brother Samuel, on November 23, 1736. "A short scheme" of mystic doctrine, he called it, and asked Samuel's⁴⁰ "thoughts upon it . . . particularly, fully, and strongly." The importance he attached to the understanding of the true relation of mysticism to the Gospel is to be measured by his evaluation of Samuel's thoughts upon his scheme: "They may be of consequence not only to all this province but to nations of Christians yet unborn." Hear, therefore, and study what John wrote of mysticism. With slight editing,⁴¹ careful scrutiny of his short scheme reveals its three parts:

- 1) That which treats of the "imperfect" seeker after mystic experience.
- 2) The perfect attainer.
- 3) Those who "advise them that have not yet attained perfection."

These are the seeker, the finder, the teacher.

To the first, mysticism, according to John Wesley, says: "You that are yourselves imperfect, know that love is your end. All things else are but means. Choose such means as lead you most to love; those alone are necessary for you. The means that others use are nothing

to you: different men are led in different ways. All means are not necessary for all men; therefore each person must use such means, and such only, as he finds necessary for him. But since we can never attain our end by being wedded to the same means; therefore we must not obstinately cleave unto anything, lest it become a hindrance, not an help. And be sure be not wedded to any means. When anything helps you no longer, lay it aside; for you can never attain your end by cleaving obstinately to the same means: you must be changing them continually. Conversation, meditation, forms of prayer, prudential rules, fixed return of public or private prayer, are helps to some; but you must judge for yourself. Perhaps fasting may help you for a time, and perhaps the holy communion. But you will be taught by the Holy Spirit and by experience how soon, how often, and how long it is good for you to take it. Perhaps, too, you may need the Holy Scripture. But if you can renounce yourself without reading, it is better than all the reading in the world. And whenever you do read it, trouble yourself about no helps; the Holy Ghost will lead you into all truth. Observe, farther, when the end is attained, the means cease."

To the finder, mysticism says: "Love is attained by them who are in the inferior way, who are utterly divested of free will, of self-love, and self-activity, and are entered into the passive state. These deified men, in whom the superior will has extinguished the inferior, enjoy such a contemplation as is not only above faith, but above sight, such as is entirely free from images, thoughts and discourse, and never interrupted by sins of infirmity or voluntary distractions. They have absolutely renounced their reason and understanding, else they could not be guided by a divine light. They seek no particular knowledge of anything; but only an obscure, general knowledge, which is far better. They know it is mercenary to look for a reward from God, and inconsistent with perfect love.

"Having thus attained the end, the means must cease. Hope is swallowed up in love. Sight, or something more than sight, takes place of faith. All particular virtues they possess in essence, being wholly given up to the divine will, and therefore need not the distinct exercise of them. They likewise work all good works essentially, not accidentally, and use all outward means only as they are moved thereto; and then to obey superiors or to avoid giving offence, but not as necessary or helpful to them.

"Public prayer, or any forms, they need not; for they pray without ceasing. Sensible devotion in any prayer they despise, it being a great

hindrance to perfection. The Scripture they need not read; for it is only His letter with whom they converse face to face. And if they do read it now and then, as for expounders, living or dead, reason, philosophy (which only puffs up, and vainly tries to bind God by logical definitions and divisions), as for knowledge of tongues, or ancient customs, they need none of them, any more than the Apostles did, for they have the same Spirit. Neither do they need the Lord's Supper, for they never cease to remember Christ in the most acceptable manner, any more than fasting, since, by constant temperance, they can keep continual fast."

To the teacher or advisor, mysticism says: "You that are to advise them that have not yet attained to perfection, press them to nothing, not to self-denial, constant private prayer, reading the Scriptures, fasting, communicating. If they love heathen poets, let them take their full swing in them. Speak but little to them in the meantime of eternity. If they are affected at any time with what you say, say no more; let them apply it, not you. You may advise them to some religious books, but stop there; let them use them as they please, and form their own reflections upon them without your intermeddling. If one who was religious falls off, let him alone. Either a man is converted to God or not: if he is not, his own will must guide him, in spite of all you can do; if he is, he is so guided by the Spirit of God as not to need your direction."

Of doing good, mysticism says to seekers and finders: "As to doing good, take care of yourself first. When you are converted, then strengthen your brethren. Beware of (what is incident to all beginners) an eager desire to set others a good example. Beware of an earnestness to make others feel what you feel yourself. Let your light shine as nothing to you. Beware of a zeal to do great things for God. Be charitable first; then do works of charity; do them when you are not dissipated thereby, or in danger of losing your soul by pride and vanity. Indeed, till then you can do no good to men's souls; and without that all done to their bodies is nothing. The command of doing good concerns not you yet. Above all, take care never to dispute about any of these points. Disputing can do no good. Is the man wicked? Cast not pearls before swine. Is he imperfect? He that disputes any advice is not yet ripe for it. Is he good? All good men agree in judgment: they differ only in words, which are all in their nature ambiguous."

An extensive presentation of John Wesley's objections to mysticism will be given in the next chapter. The purpose of the present part of this work is to show that John Wesley discarded mysticism by discarding William Law, the mystic.

Notice, first, that the quoted letter to his brother is not any refutation of mysticism but a description of it, as John found it in personal inquiries, in letters, and in the writings of such mystics as Johann Tauler, Miguel de Molinos, and Jacob Böhme, as he says in his letter. The letter's only criticism of mysticism is the possible one at its close: "May God deliver you and yours from all error and all unholiness!"

As a description of mysticism, it is not inaccurate. There are as many kinds of mysticism as there are mystics. In 1773, Wesley wrote, "If you study the mystic writers, you will find as many religions as books; and for this plain reason, each of them makes his own experience the standard of religion."⁴² The same wide variety, William James puts in the words: "So many men, so many minds."⁴³ The same man said that mystic experiences have four characteristics: "ineffability"—that is, they are inexpressible in words; "noetic quality"—that is, they are states of knowledge . . . illuminations, revelations, full of significance and authority"; transiency—that is, they are brief, lasting from half-an-hour to two hours; and "passivity"—that is, the person's own will "is the abeyance . . . grasped and held by a superior power." With these in mind, a reading of Wesley's description shows items of each of these features.

John Wesley had eight major objections to mysticism, some of which will appear in what must be said of his rejection of the mystic William Law. A good résumé of them is found in his *Journal* for February 5, 1764, when, having read a *Defence of the Mystic Writers* by a Mr. Hartley, he wrote, "But it does not satisfy me; I must still object, 1. To their sentiments; the chief of them do not appear to me to have any conception of church communion. Again, they slight not only works of piety, the ordinances of God, but even works of mercy. And yet most of them, yea, all that I have seen, hold justification by works. In general, they are wise above what is written, indulging themselves in many unscriptural speculations. I object, 2. To their spirit, that most of them are of a dark, shy, reserved, unsociable temper. And that they are apt to despise all who differ from them, as carnal, unenlightened men. I object, 3. To their whole phraseology; it is both unscriptural and affectedly mysterious. I say affectedly: for this does

not necessarily result from the nature of the things spoken of. St. John speaks as high and as deep things as Jacob Böhme. Why then does not Jacob speak as plainly as him?"

Turn attention now to William Law, the particular mystic with whom, during and after his quest, John Wesley had relations. As far as extant records tell, Wesleyan contacts with Law were broken by the journey to Georgia; but, upon their return, were resumed. The first to return to England was Charles Wesley, who landed at Deal on December 3, 1736.⁴⁴ Illness and his secretaryship kept him busy for the present. Then, his *Journal* for August 31, 1737, reads, "I talked at large upon my state with Mr. Law, at Putney. The sum of his advice was, 'Renounce yourself, and be not impatient.'" He saw Law again on September 9th, with these results: "I consulted Mr. Law a second time, and asked him several questions. 'With what comment shall I read the Scriptures?' 'None.' 'What do you think of one who dies unrenewed, while endeavouring after it?' 'It concerns neither you to ask, nor me to answer.' 'Shall I write once more to such a person?' 'No.' 'But I am persuaded it will do him good.' 'Sir, I have told you my opinion.' 'Shall I write to you?' 'Nothing I can either speak or write will do you any good.'" ⁴⁵ Charles, then, got no aid from Law in his own search.

Upon this record, Jackson remarks: "There was more truth in this concluding remark than Mr. Law was aware of." It can be added that the same ignorance was true of Charles Wesley; for both of them, especially for the inquirer, the significant fact was whether either of them realized the intellectual and religious status of the person questioned. A comparison of Law's replies with John Wesley's description of mysticism reveals the fact that these replies are paralleled in John's description. Since John wrote his "short scheme" to Samuel ten months before this interview; and since, between his landing in England and this interview, Charles undoubtedly had contacts with Samuel, he might have known that Law was now a mystic. If so, these two interviews could date active Wesleyan rejection of William Law.

If so, the next discard move occurred "during Böhler's stay in England"⁴⁶—that is, between February 7 and May 4, 1738,⁴⁷ when John took Böhler to visit Law, and took two others beside Böhler with him.⁴⁸ Böhler's account of the visit reads, "I began speaking to him of faith in Christ. He was silent. Then he began to speak of mystical

matters. I spoke to him of faith in Christ again. He was silent. Then he began to speak of mystical matters again. I saw his state at once."⁴⁹ The presence of John's "short scheme" in England, Charles Wesley's probable knowledge of its contents, his two visits to Law within two weeks, the parallels between his questions and his brother's letter, John's taking Böhler to visit Law, and his taking two others along are facts, leading to the conclusion that the Wesleys were sounding out their old mentor. Therefore, their turning from him was not made through hearsay but through first-hand evidence.

The speed and vigor of John Wesley's turn appears in ten days⁵⁰ in the letter he wrote Law on the 14th of May.

He informed Law that, for the past two years, he had been modeling his preaching after Law's first two books, finding "all that heard have allowed that the law is great, wonderful, and holy." However, when they, along with Wesley, attempted to "fulfill it, they found that it was too high for man, and that by doing 'the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified.'" ⁵¹ John and others had run against what Hurst said of Law's first books, "The defect of these noble books is that they do not so well proclaim the power for holiness as declare the duty of it."⁵² Not knowing the Gospel's way of beginning the experience of inward holiness, but knowing only the outward rectitude of man's works, they were seeking only by these last. Attributing failure to insufficient effort, John wrote, "I exhorted them, and stirred up myself, to pray earnestly for the grace of God, and to use all the other means of obtaining that grace which the all-wise God hath appointed. But still, both they and I were more and more convinced that this is a law by which a man cannot live; the law in our members continually warring against it, and bringing us into deeper captivity to the law of sin." John Wesley, then, in his quest, had come to Paul's impasse: "By the law is the knowledge of sin"⁵³ and of Holiness;⁵⁴ but it has no power to "perform that which is good."⁵⁵

Then, from Peter Böhler, to whom he complained of the law's heavy yoke, he learned the true beginning of the Gospel way: "Believe, and thou shalt be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy heart, and nothing else shall be impossible to thee. This faith, indeed, as well as the salvation which it brings, is the free gift of God. But seek, and thou shalt find. Strip thyself naked of thy own works, and thy own righteousness, and fly to Him. For whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out."

Having written this, John, in the next paragraph to Law, explodes:

Now, sir, suffer me to ask: How will you answer it to our common Lord that you never gave me this advice? Did you never read the Acts of the Apostles, or the answer of Paul to him who said, "What must I do to be saved?" Or are you wiser than he? Why did I scarce ever hear you name the name of Christ? never, so as to ground anything upon "faith in his blood?" Who is this who is laying another foundation? If you say you advised other things as preparatory to this, what is this but laying a foundation below the foundation? Is not Christ, then, the first as well as the last? If you say you advised them because you knew that I had faith already, verily you knew nothing of me; you discerned not my spirit at all. I know that I had not faith, unless the faith of a devil, the faith of Judas, that speculative, notional, airy shadow, which lives in the head, not in the heart.

Judged by the proper courtesy of the daily run of human associations, such language is inadmissible but, in this case, its justification lies in the eternal significance of the matters involved, in the intensity of the writer's search of those things, and in his desperation at disappointment where he expected satisfaction.

May month saw another letter from each to the other, Wesley writing first. Then there is silence between them for nearly eight years. Meantime, Law was publishing other books, which Wesley read. His *Journal's* entry for October 23, 1739, is: "I read over Mr. Law's book on the New Birth: philosophical, speculative, precarious; Behmenish, void and vain! O what a fall is there!" Thursday, July 27, 1749, occurred this: "I read Mr. Law on the Spirit of Prayer.⁵⁶ There are many masterly strokes therein, and the whole is lively and entertaining; but it is another Gospel: for if God was never angry, (as this tract asserts), He could never be reconciled; and consequently, the whole Christian doctrine of reconciliation by Christ falls to the ground at once."

Meantime, also, other people were reading these books, some of whom doubtless were Methodists.⁵⁷ Having himself discarded Law, he is concerned for others. Care for these, as well as for Gospel truth, led John to write to William Law the highly important letter of January 6, 1756. It was his last letter to Law, who died five years later. With this letter, the next chapter must concern itself.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

WESLEY BEGAN this letter on December 15, 1755, and completed it on January 6, 1756. It is one of his longest letters, requiring thirty-eight pages of fine print in the Telford edition, or about twenty thousand words.¹ His naming it "only a sketch" of Law's "strange system" is not wit or sarcasm but, in view of the limitless diversity of mystics and mysticism, is all that need be done. His apology for its brevity is, "I dare not; I cannot answer either to God or man for such an employment of my time."² He does write what he considered an adequate exposure of Law's mystic errors.

Two paragraphs constitute his introduction, one concerning himself; the other, concerning them both.

In matters of religion I regard no writings but the inspired. Tauler, Böhmen, and an whole army of mystic authors are with me nothing to St. Paul. In every point I appeal "to the law and the testimony," and value no authority but this.

At a time when I was in great danger of not valuing this authority enough you made that important observation: "I see where your mistake lies. You would have a philosophical religion; but there can be no such thing. Religion is the most plain, simple thing in the world. It is only, 'We love Him because He first loved us.' So far as you add philosophy to religion, just so far you spoil it." This remark I have never forgotten since; and I trust in God I never shall.

In the first, he is stating the final authority by which he judges all matters, religious in character: and by which he has judged the two mystic books of Law. The second quotes Law's own words, used by him in describing John Wesley's past religious danger and warning of it. Now their positions are changed: the former teacher, if not past it, is at the danger point; and the former inquirer, having proved by his

own experience his teacher's counsel, is urging the same counsel in his attempt to save him to whom he owed, certainly in part, his own salvation.

This long letter treats of Law's mystic teachings as they appeared in two of his quite recent books: *The Spirit of Prayer*, and *The Spirit of Love*. His treatment deals, first, with Law's mystic philosophy, and second, with his consequent religious tenets. The first produced the second, John claimed: "Bad philosophy has by insensible degrees paved the way for bad divinity."

Law's mystic philosophy concerned itself, in the main, with four areas: 1. Things Antecedent to Creation; 2. Creation; 3. Adam in Paradise; 4. The Fall of Man.

A sketch of each illustrates what some mystics can concoct.

1. Law delved into the timeless-time before Creation was. Of this, William Law, whose words John Wesley quotes,³ said these things: "All that can be conceived is God, or nature, or creature." Of these, Law says comparatively little about God and creature: most, of what he termed "nature." He wrote of God: "Nothing is before eternal nature but God. . . . Nature as well as God is antecedent to all creatures. . . . There is an eternal nature, as universal and as unlimited as God. . . . Nature is the first birth of God."

Of creature, Law made no statement, but appears to have dropped it or accorded it such a minor place that Wesley regarded it as non-important.

Much does Law say of nature. "Nature is the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God." This sounds good until one sees these details: "Nature is in itself an hungry, wrathful fire of life. . . . Nature is and can be only a desire. Desire is the very being of nature. . . . Nature is only a desire, because it is for the sake of something else. . . . Nature is only a torment, because it cannot help itself to that which it wants." Wesley here asks what anyone naturally does, "If desire is the very being of nature, if it is a torment, an hungry, wrathful fire, how is it 'the outward manifestation of the invisible glories of God'?"

"Nature has seven chief properties, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a birth from the Deity in nature." These properties are: "attraction, resistance, motion, fire, the form of light and love, sound or understanding, and a life of triumphing joy." Law divides these seven into three parts: "the first three properties of nature are

the whole essence of that desire which is, and is called, 'nature'; naught is specified of the next three; the seventh is "that which brings the three and three properties into union."

Then come these items: "Nature and darkness and self are but three different expressions of one and the same thing. . . . Nature has all evil and no evil in it. . . . Nature, self, or darkness has not only no evil in it, but is the only ground of all good." John comments, "O rare darkness!"

2. About creation in general, Law said, "A creation out of nothing is no better sense than a creation into nothing." The last, John asserted, was a "contradiction in terms," but the other is not. Law continued: "Creation out of nothing has not the least tittle of Scripture to support it. . . . It separates everything from God. It leaves no relation between God and the creature. For if it is created out of nothing, it cannot have something of God in it." Wesley inquired of Law's statement, "Nature is the first birth of God," if God did not create it, "how came it out of Him?" Whichever way creation came to be, one can ask Law, if, as his words say, God existed first, how is "nature as well as God antecedent to all creatures?"

Having brought nature out of God in some fashion as unites the two, the result was, apparently, a "spiritual materiality," and "this spiritual materiality brought forth the heavenly flesh and blood of angels"; and so "the materiality of the angelic kingdom was spiritual."

Thus Law arrives at a kingdom of angels. The description of this kingdom, he puts into the mouth of God.

Angels first inhabited the region which is now taken up by the sun and the planets that move round him. It was then all a glassy sea, in which perpetual scenes of light and glory were rising and changing in obedience to their call. . . . The whole glassy sea was a mirror of beauteous forms, colours, and sounds, perpetually springing up, having also fruits and vegetables, but not gross, as the fruits of the world. This was continually bringing forth new figures of life; not animals, but ideal forms of the endless divisibility of life. . . . Hence they fancied they had infinite power, and resolved to abjure all submission to God. In that moment they were whirled down into their own dark, fiery, working powers. And in that moment the glassy sea, by the wrathful workings of these spirits, was broken in pieces, and became a chaos of fire and wrath, thickness and

darkness. . . . Darkness was absolutely unknown to the angels till they fell. Hence it appears that darkness is the ground of the materiality of nature. . . . The glassy sea being become thick and dark, the spirit converted its fire and wrath into sun and stars, its dross and darkness into earth, its mobility into air, its moisture into water. . . . The grounds of true religion cannot be truly known but by going so far back as this fall of angels.

Three objections John Wesley has to this: 1. "How can anything of this be proved?" He means, of course, by reason, common sense, and the Bible: and the mere mention of either is answer sufficient. 2. Referring to Law's making God speak this description, Wesley asks, "Is it well for a man to take such liberty with the Most High God?" 3. "Is not this being immeasurably 'wise above that which is written' wiser than all the Prophets and all the Apostles put together?" This is one of his major reasons for rejection of Law's mysticism.

3. Adam in Paradise. As quoted by John Wesley in this part of his mysticism, Law is quite brief. The fall of the angels wrought chaos; but God moves to restore the former order. "The end God proposed in the creation was the restoring all things to their glorious state. . . . Adam was created to keep what is called the curse covered and overcome by paradise. . . . Paradise is an heavenly birth of life. . . . Adam had at first both an heavenly and an earthly body. Into the latter was the spirit of this world breathed; and in this spirit and body did the heavenly spirit and body of Adam dwell. The spirit and body of this world were the medium through which he was to have commerce with the world. But it was no more alive in him than Satan and the serpent were alive in him at his first creation. But they were kept inactive by the power of the heavenly man within him. He had power to choose whether he would use his outward body only as a means of opening the outward world to him or of opening the bestial life in himself. Till this was opened in him, nothing in this outward world, no more than his outward body, could act upon him, make any impressions upon him, or raise any sensations in him; neither had he any feeling of good or evil from it. . . . God said to man at his creation, Rule thou over this imperfect, perishing world without partaking of its impure nature."

Of this, John asks, "How shall we reconcile this with the Mosaic account?" And adds, "All this being entirely new, we must beg clear and full proof of it."

4. The Fall of Man. Adam, having power to choose, "let in an adulterous love of the world: by this his virginity was lost. . . . This shows that Adam had now made that not to be good which God saw to be good when he created him. . . . Adam had lost much of his perfection before Eve was taken out of him. . . . God then divided the human nature into a male and a female creature; otherwise man would have brought forth his own likeness out of himself, in the same manner as he had a birth from God . . . he had no longer a power of bringing forth a birth from himself. . . . God took his Eve out of him, as a lesser evil, to avoid a greater. For it was less a folly to love the female part of himself than to love things lower than himself. . . . Marriage came in by Adam's falling from his first imperfection. . . . Had Adam stood, no Eve would have been taken out of him. But from Eve God raised that angelic man whom Adam should have brought forth without Eve, who is called the Second Adam, as being both male and female. . . . The Second Adam is now to do that which the first should have done. . . . Our having from Him a new heavenly flesh and blood, raised in us by his spiritual power, is the strongest proof that we should have been born of Adam by the same spiritual power."

As in the previous three sections, so here also is one fain to tarry for detailed reply, especially so since this section has much to say of Christ. However, since Wesley's own answers are given in the second part of his letter, it is needful to note here only his general characterizations of Law's teachings: that this section "affords many questions not very easy to be answered"; that these assertions are "marvellous in the highest degree"; that Law is but "dragging Behmen out of his awful obscurity, by pouring light upon his venerable darkness"; and that Law's work is "flatly contradictory to the Mosaic account."

Having sketched Law's "bad philosophy," Wesley attends to its consequent "bad divinity." This part of his letter is by far the longer, requiring twenty-seven of its thirty-eight pages, wherein he evaluates and answers Law in these propositions:

1. "You deny the omnipotence of God."
2. You "deny His justice."
3. You "deny the Scripture doctrine of Justification."
4. "Your doctrine of the New Birth."
5. Your doctrine of "Christ in every man."
6. Your "short and easy way to heaven."
7. Your claim there is "no such place in the universe" as hell.

1. John Wesley's judgment is that Law's mystic divinity denies the omnipotence of God by a "heap of bold assertions," the basic thesis of which is: "This is an axiom that cannot be shaken, nothing can rise higher than its first created nature; and therefore an angel at last must have been an angel at first." Therefore, "no creature could come into my natural life unless such a state of nature was antecedent to it. . . . All that God does is and must be done in and by the powers of nature. . . . There cannot possibly be any other difference between created beings than arises from that out of which they were created. . . . No fruits or vegetables could have sprung up in the divided elements but because they are parts of that glassy sea where angelic fruits grew before. . . . All outward nature being fallen from heaven must, as well as it can, do and work as it did in heaven. . . . God could not create man with a soul and body unless there was such a thing as nature antecedent to the creation of man. . . . The life of this world can reach no farther than this world; no omnipotence of God can carry it farther. . . ."

To which, Wesley answers: "What divinity! and what reasoning to support it! Can God raise nothing higher than its first created state? Is it not possible for Him to change an ox or a stone into a rational philosopher or a child of Abraham? to change a man or a worm into an angel of heaven? Poor omnipotence which cannot do this! Whether he will or no is another question."

2. Law's philosophy led him to "deny God's justice" also. Wesley expatiates on this point, using six pages of his letter. He does so, first, because contemporary controversy between Deism and the Gospel hinged upon this point; and, second, because this, with its necessary denial of God's wrath, was the "prime fallacy"⁴ of the mystics and "totally subversive of the very essence of Christianity."

Wesley quotes Law's belief in this matter: "There is no wrath or vindictive justice in God." He answers Law by replying, one by one, to Law's thirteen arguments, to his seven objections; and by presenting forty-two Scripture passages which speak contrary to Law's assertions. A sample from each is necessary here.

Law claimed: "No wrath (anger, vindictive justice) ever was or ever will be in God. If a wrath of God were anywhere, it must be everywhere." How Law laid himself open to rebuttal here is seen in Wesley's answer: "So it is, as sure as the just God is everywhere."

Law asserted: "To say God ever punished any creature is as absurd as to say, He began the creation out of wrath." Wesley said: "It is

not as absurd to say 'God is angry at the guilty' as to say 'God is angry at the innocent.' Now, it is certain, when God began the creation of man, no guilty men were in being."

Law averred: "God can give nothing but happiness from Himself because He hath nothing else in Himself." Wesley replied: "As if you had said, 'God can give nothing but infinity from Himself because He hath nothing else in Himself.'"

Even more pointedly, Law declared: "God can no more begin to have any wrath after the creature is fallen than He could be infinite wrath and rage from all eternity." Objecting to Law's introducing the term "rage," as meaning "excessive anger" (that is, anger beyond the limits of justice),⁵ Wesley countered: "God was infinitely just from all eternity; in consequence of which His anger then began to show itself when man had sinned."

Finally, to support his position that, because there was no wrath in God, He never punished, Law held: "To say Adam's miserable state was a punishment inflicted upon him by God is an utter absurdity. . . . His sin had not the least punishment of any kind inflicted upon it by God." Wesley quoted from chapters two and three of Genesis and inquired, "Can any man read this and affirm, 'God did not inflict the least punishment of any kind either on Eve or Adam or the serpent'? With what eyes or understanding, then, must he read!"

Law explained the Eden consequences by this evasion: "All that came on Adam was implied in what he chose to himself." Wesley gives the vivid retort: "It was. He chose it to himself in the same sense that he who robs chooses to be hanged. But this does not at all prove that the death which one or the other suffers is no punishment."

Law wildly declares: "Fire and brimstone or manna rained on the earth are only one and the same love. It was the same love that preserved Noah, burned up Sodom, and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the Red Sea." Wesley rejoined: "Surely nothing can equal this, unless you add (which indeed you must do, to be consistent with yourself), 'It is one and the same love which will say, "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."'"

Law insists, finally, his claim there is in God neither anger, nor wrath, nor vindictive justice, nor any punishment is "openly asserted, constantly affirmed and repeated, in the plainest letter of Scripture." In answer, Wesley quotes forty-two Scripture statements to the contrary. Eight assert God's justice, as Romans 3:25-26, "Whom God hath set forth, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that

believeth in Jesus." Twenty-seven declare God's wrath, as Psalm 103:8-9, "The Lord is slow to anger, and of great kindness; He will not always chide, neither keepeth He His anger forever."⁶ Seven say God punishes, as Isaiah 26:21, "Behold, the Lord cometh to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Wesley closes these forty-two Bible verses by asking, "Now, which am I to believe? God or man?"

3. You "deny the Scripture doctrine of Justification." Upon this, Law's teachings were these. "Regeneration is the whole of man's salvation. . . . There is no wrath in God, no fictitious atonement. . . . The atonement of the divine wrath or justice and the extinguishing of sin in the creature are only different expressions for the same thing. . . . Salvation, which all divines agree includes both justification and sanctification, is nothing else but to be made like Christ . . . All that Christ does as an atonement has no operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man. . . . The only work of Christ as your Redeemer is to raise into life the smothered spark of heaven in you. . . . He is our atonement and reconciliation with God, because by Him we are set again in our first state of holiness. . . . Redemption is nothing else but the life of God in the soul."

Wesley's specific answers are preceded by a few general observations. Law's teachings on justification are only "peremptory assertions"; and, John said, "till they are fully proved I cannot give up my Bible." Further, he said to Law, "Indeed, you do not appear to have the least conception of the matter; no, not even to know what the term 'justification' means." One should recall here, that for several years John himself did not know the Bible's content of the term but that, now in 1756, both by understanding and personal experience, he has known its meaning for eighteen years. His appraisal of Law's teachings, therefore, is trustworthy.

Law, having denied any atoning character to Christ's death, John asks him, "If the Son of God did not die to atone for our sins, what did He die for?" He lists Law's written answers. "He died to extinguish our own hell within us . . . to show that He was above the world, death, hell, and Satan. . . . His death was the only possible way of overcoming all the evil that was in fallen man. . . . Through this He got power to give the same victory to all his brethren of the human race."

The first of these Wesley admits, but specifies that it was "not the first but the second end" of Christ's death. The first purpose of Christ's

death was man's justification. Of the second, he asks, "Could He not have done this without dying at all?" Law's third reason for Christ's dying, akin to the second, Wesley said was true, "supposing He atoned for our sins. But if this supposition be not made, His death was not the only possible way whereby the Almighty could have overcome all things." What any other possible way there might be, he does not specify. Of Law's fourth reason, John questions, "Had He not this power before?"

Inasmuch as the doctrine of justification by faith is of such "inexpressible moment" that there "can be no Christian Church where the whole notion of justification is ridiculed and exploded," Wesley takes three pages of finer print to quote an account of it by Anna Schurman,⁷ whom he characterized as "perhaps a woman of the strongest understanding the world ever saw." Part of it is: "The origin and cause of our redemption is the effable love of God the Father, who willed to redeem us by the blood of His own Son; the grace of the Son, who freely took our curse upon Him, and imparts His blessing and merits to us; and the Holy Spirit, who communicates the love of the Father and the grace of the Son to our hearts. When we speak of this and of the satisfaction of Christ, we speak of the inmost mystery of the Christian faith. Therefore, all the inventions of men ought now to be kept at the utmost distance; nor can anything certain be established without the express authority of Scripture. And herein is offered first to our consideration the only begotten Son of God, as the Head of the redeemed, the righteous Servant of God, who by the knowledge of Himself 'shall justify many.' Him hath God constituted the 'surety of that better covenant—the covenant of grace.'" The wide, clear difference between Law's teachings and these is patent.

4. "Your doctrine of the New Birth." Quite extended are Law's ideas upon this theme; "Our fall is nothing else but the falling of our soul from its heavenly body and spirit into a bestial body and spirit. Our redemption is nothing else but the regaining our first angelic spirit and body. . . . The painful sense of what you are, kindled into a working state of sensibility by the light of God, is the light and fire from whence the spirit of prayer proceeds. In its first kindling nothing is found but pain, wrath, and darkness; and therefore its first prayer is all humility. . . . This prayer is met by divine love, and changed into hymns and songs of thanksgiving. . . . See the true reason why only the Son of God could be our Redeemer. It is because He alone could be able to bring to life again that celestial spirit and body which had

died in Adam. . . . See also why a man must 'be born again of water and of the Spirit.' He must be born again of the Spirit because Adam's heavenly spirit was lost. He must be born of water because that heavenly body which Adam lost was formed out of the heavenly materiality, which is called water. . . . The necessity of our regaining our first heavenly body is the necessity of our eating the body and blood of Christ. . . . The necessity of having again our first heavenly spirit is shown by the necessity of our being baptized with the Holy Ghost. . . . Man hath the light and water of an outward nature to quench the wrath of his own life, and the light and weakness of Christ, as a seed born in him, to bring forth anew the image of God. . . . We are neither saved by faith nor by works. . . . The desire of turning to God is the coming of Christ into the soul. This faith will save thee. . . . Divine love having now changed one's prayer of humility 'into hymns and songs of thanksgiving,' this state of fervour melts away all earthly passions and affections, and leaves no inclination in the soul but to delight in God alone. . . . Then its prayer changes again, and continually stands in fulness of faith, in purity of love, in absolute resignation to do and be what and how his Beloved pleaseth. This is the last state of the spirit of prayer, and is our highest union with God in this life."

So taught William Law. What John Wesley thought of it is this: He discards Law's ideas of heavenly body and spirit as made to live again by regeneration, characterizing this thesis as "the unscriptural dream of Behmen's heated imagination." He acknowledges frankly Law's saying "the life of God in the soul" is an "essential part" of redemption, but the remainder of his definition he called "no part of it at all . . . a whim, a madman's dream, a chimera, a mere nonentity."

The source of the spirit of prayer, Law described "confusedly and obscurely," he thought, and commented, it would be "more intelligible" to say, "The convincing spirit of God gives you to see and feel that you are a poor, undone, guilty, helpless sinner; at the same time He incites you to cry for help to Him who is 'mighty to save.' " Divine love's response to such a prayer as its alteration of the sense of pain, wrath, darkness, humility into singing gratitude is a change, which Wesley accepts but which he attributes to certain expressions of that love: "It is so when, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' "

That Christ alone could redeem by reviving the "celestial spirit and

body," he rejects: "Not so; but He alone could be our Redeemer because He alone, 'by that one oblation of Himself once offered,' could make 'a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.'"

Concerning Law's understanding of rebirth by water and spirit, Wesley wrote, "Nay, but because Adam had lost the inward image of God wherein he was created. And no less that the Almighty Spirit of God could renew that image in his soul." And of Law's interpretation of being born of water, he said, "Vain philosophy! The plain meaning of the expression, 'Except a man be born of water,' is neither more nor less than this, 'Except he be baptized.' And the plain reason why he ought to be born of water thus is because God hath appointed it. He hath appointed it as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; which grace is 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.'"

The operation, in renewal, which Law accorded the Holy Ghost, Wesley refused: "No. That we 'must be baptized with the Holy Ghost' implies this and no more—that we cannot be 'renewed in righteousness and true holiness' any otherwise than by being overshadowed, quickened, and animated by that blessed Spirit."

Upon Law's attributing the "new image of God" in one as thereby a joint operation of the "light and water of an outward nature" and an inborn "seed" of the "light and meekness of Christ," Wesley comments, "It is not strange that you speak so confusedly and darkly as you generally do of the new birth, seeing you seem to have no conception of that faith whereby we are born again."

The laconic assertion of Law, "We are neither saved by faith nor works," is dismissed with equal brevity: "Flatly contrary to the declaration of St. Paul, 'By grace we are saved through faith.'"

Saving faith, as understood by the mystic, elicits Wesley's confession: "I know the contrary from experience. I had this desire for many years before I ever knew what saving faith was."

Divine love's changing one's prayer of pain into one's song of gratitude means, to Law, an access of "fervour," which achieves these results: "This state of fervour melts away all earthly passions and affections, and leaves no inclination in the soul but to delight in God alone." Accepting this fervor and admitting the effects, Wesley more particularly specifies its sources: "It is so when, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . It

is certain this is the genuine effect of 'the love of God shed abroad in the heart'; which expression of St. Paul, I suppose, means the same with 'this state of fervour.' "

Consequent upon the above operations of fervor, Law said this ensued: "Then its prayer changes again, and continually stands in fulness of faith, in purity of love, in absolute resignation to do and be what and how his Beloved pleaseth. This is the last state of the spirit of prayer, and is our highest union with God in this life." Then he wrote, "Fervour is good, and ought to be loved; but distress and coldness are better. It brings the soul nearer to God than the fervour did." Of this inconsistency, Wesley asked, "Can coldness bring us to an union higher than the highest?"

John Wesley closes this part of his criticism of mysticism with a great paragraph, which cannot be omitted, because it represents, from the viewpoint of eighteen increasingly successful years after his conversion, his estimate of his quest, his point of entanglement with mysticism, and his personal practice and public policy in maintaining his own and his peoples' Christian faith, life, and zeal. Stemming from Law's declaration that spiritual coldness exceeds spiritual fervor in power to bring one into the highest union with God, it reads:

The doctrine that it is better and more profitable for the soul to lose its sense of the love of God than to keep it is not only unscriptural but naturally attended with the most fatal consequences. It directly tends to obstruct, if not to destroy, the work of God in the heart, by causing men to bless themselves in those ways which damp the fervour of their affections, and to imagine they are considerably advanced in grace when they have grieved, yea quenched, the Spirit. Nay, but let all who now feel the love of God in their hearts, and "walk in the light as He is in the light," labour by every possible means to 'keep themselves in the love of God.' Let them ever be "fervent in spirit"; let them "rejoice evermore," and stir up the gift of God which is in them. And if at any time "coldness seizes upon them," let them be assured they have grieved the Spirit of God. Let them be affrighted; let them fear lest they sink lower and lower—yea, into total deadness and hardness of heart. At the peril of their souls, let them not rest in darkness, but examine themselves, search out their spirits, cry vehemently to God, and not cease till He restores the light of His countenance.

5. Next, John Wesley discards Law's doctrine of "Christ in every man." By this, Law meant: "Poor sinner, Christ dwelleth in the center, the fund or bottom, of thy soul. . . . When Adam fell, this center of his soul became a prisoner in an earthly animal. But from the moment God spoke Christ into Adam, all the treasures of the divine nature, the light and spirit of God, came again into man, into the center of his soul. . . . Every man has Christ in his spirit, lying there as in a state of insensibility and death. . . . Something of heaven lies in every soul in a state of inactivity and death. . . . All the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ lie hid as a seed in thy soul. . . . Thou art poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, while all the peace and joy of God are within thee."

Wesley's general evaluation of Law's thesis is: "If this doctrine of the profitableness of coldness above fervour directly tends to make believers easy while they are sliding back into unbelief, you have another," he wrote to Law, "which tends as directly to make them easy who never believed at all—I mean that of Christ in every man."

His first specific criticism is to ask whether or not those universally present qualities of Christ are "active or inactive? living and stirring or in a state of insensibility and death?" Obviously, they cannot be both, as Law asserted.

His next criticism was of Law's claiming, on one hand, that all men possess "all the peace and joy of God" and, on the other hand, are "poor, blind, naked, and miserable." John wrote, "This is most wonderful of all! Are these with him who is 'dead in sin,' who is a 'stranger to all that is holy and heavenly'? If they are, how can he be miserable who has 'all the peace and joy of God within him'? Will you say, 'They are in him but he does not feel them'? Nay, then they are not in him. I have peace in me no longer than I feel peace; I feel joy, or I have it not." The root of this position appeared in June, 1725, when, referring to Jeremy Taylor's affirming that the Holy Ghost at the communion "confers on us the graces we pray for," John said, "Now, surely these graces are not of so little force, as that we can't perceive whether we have them or no; and if we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, . . . certainly we must be sensible of it."⁸ Thus, for thirty-one years, this belief in an inner witness to the reality of the Gospel has survived all tests and has been verified by the testimony of his own warmed heart, as well as by those of many others.

Law's six proofs of his position, Wesley states and answers in order.

(1). "No faith could ever begin, unless every man had Christ in him.' This proposition needs just as much proof itself as that which it is brought to prove." (2). "Unless the remains of the perfect love of God were in every man, it would be impossible he should ever love God at all.' Why so? Cannot God give His love this moment to one who never loved before?" (3). "Unless Christ was hidden in the soul, there could not be the least beginning of man's salvation. For what could begin to desire heaven, unless something of heaven was in the soul? What could? Why, any soul which had nothing but hell in it before, the moment grace was infused from above."

(4). "'The Ten Commandments lay hid in men's souls' (how?) 'till called into sensibility by writing them on stone. Just so Christ lies in the soul till awakened by the mediatorial office of the holy Jesus.' This is only assertion still, not proof. But what do you mean by the mediatorial office of Christ? And how is Christ 'awakened by the mediatorial office of the holy Jesus?'" (5). "'The sea cannot be moved by any other wind than that which had its birth from the sea itself.' I think it can. I have seen it 'moved by a wind which had its birth from the land.'" (6). "'The musician cannot make his instrument give any other melody than that which lies hid in it as its inward state.' Did the tune, then, lie hid in the trumpet before the trumpeter blew? And was this tune, or another, or all that ever were and will be played on it, the inward state of the trumpet? An unhappy comparison! For the instrument can have no melody or sound at all from itself. And most unhappily applied to the operations of God upon the souls of men. For has God no more power over my soul than I have over a musical instrument?"

Wesley concludes:

These are your arguments to prove that Christ is in every man—a blessing which St. Paul thought was peculiar to believers. He said, "Christ is in you except ye be reprobates," unbelievers. You say, Christ is in you whether ye be reprobates or no. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," saith the Apostle. Yea, but 'every man,' saith Mr. Law, 'hath the Spirit of God. The Spirit of Christ is in every soul.'" "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life," saith St. John. But Mr. Law saith, "Every man hath the Son of God." Sleep on, then, ye sons of Belial, and take your rest; ye are all safe: for "he that hath the Son hath life."

There can hardly be any doctrine under heaven more agreeable

to flesh and blood; nor any which more directly tends to prevent the very dawn of conviction, or at least to hinder its deepening in the soul and coming to a sound issue. None more naturally tends to keep men asleep in sin and to lull asleep those who begin to be awakened. Only persuade men of this, "Christ is already in thy heart; thou hast now the inspiration of His Spirit; all the peace and joy of God are within thee—yea, all the holy nature, tempers, and Spirit of Christ"; and you need no more: the siren-song quiets all his sorrow and fear. As soon as you have sewed this pillow to his soul he sinks back into the sleep of death.

6. Your "short and easy way to heaven." Law's way is "not a long, narrow, troublesome, roundabout path, like that described in the Bible, but one that will compendiously save the soul . . . a way so plain that they who follow it need no Bible, no human teaching, no outward means whatever, being every one able to stand alone, every one sufficient for himself!"

In this short and easy way, "The first step is to turn wholly from yourself and to give up yourself wholly unto God." Wesley replies, "How grievously do we stumble at the threshold! . . . Am I, then, to step first on the highest round of the ladder? Not unless you turn it upside down. The way to heaven would be short indeed if the first and the last step were all one, if we were to step as far the moment we set out as we can do till we enter glory."

By giving oneself up to God, Law understood this: "Every sincere wish and desire for Christian virtues is giving yourself to Him and the very perfection of faith." Wesley wrote: "Far, very far from it: I know from the experience of a thousand persons, as well as from Scripture and the very reason of the thing, that a man may have sincere desires after all these long before he attains them. He may sincerely wish to give himself up to God long before he is able to do so. He may desire this, not only before he has the perfection, but before he has any degree of saving faith."

Step three in his short, easy way is both easy and short indeed: "You may easily and immediately, by the mere turning of your mind, have all these virtues—patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God." John ejaculates, "Who may? Not I: not you; not any man that is born of a woman: as is proved by the daily experience of all that know what patience, meekness, or resignation means."

Next, how to do this whole giving up of oneself and how to know

one has its subsequent results, Law states this way: "I will give you an infallible touchstone. Retire from all conversation only for a month. Neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself. Stop all former workings of your heart and mind, and stand all this month in prayer to God. If your heart cannot give itself up in this manner to prayer, be fully assured you are an infidel." "If this be so, the infidels are a goodly company," Wesley retorts, and adds, "But I would be glad to know by what authority you give us this touchstone, and how you prove it to be infallible. I read nothing like it in the oracles of God."

Fifth, meanwhile there is this guidance: "Stop all self-activity; be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to the inward light. . . . Open thy heart to all its impressions . . . wholly stopping the workings of thy own reason and judgment. . . . When once we apprehend that all of God and our own nothingness, it brings a kind of infallibility into the soul in which it dwells; all that is vain and false and deceitful is forced to vanish and fly before it. "Hence, you have no question to ask of anybody." Law, however, raises and answers two. "How am I to keep up the flame of love?" He replies, "I wonder you should want to know this. Does a blind or sick or lame man want to know how he should desire sight, health or limbs?" The other is, "May I not take my own passions or the suggestions of evil spirits for the workings of the Spirit of God?" Law says, "Every man knows when he is governed by the spirit of wrath, envy, or covetousness as easily and as certainly as he knows when he is hungry. Now, the knowledge of the Spirit of God in yourself is as perceptible as covetousness and liable to no more delusion. His Spirit is more distinguishable from all other spirits than any of your natural affections from one another. Seek for help no other way, neither from men nor books; but wholly leave yourself to God."

Wesley's replies are these. To the inward-light counsel, he wrote the warning, "Beware 'the light which is in thee be not darkness.'" To halting one's reason and judgment, he objected: "I find no such advice in the Word of God. And I fear they who stop the workings of their reason lie the more open to the workings of their imagination." Regarding Law's stating one knows certainly the character of his own spirit, John affirmed, "Indeed he does not; neither as easily or as certainly. Without great care he may take wrath to be pious zeal, envy to be virtuous emulation, and covetousness to be Christian prudence

or laudable frugality." The human soul is "liable to ten thousand delusions."

Law's advising against seeking assistance in books, or men, or in retirement brings the discussion of mysticism to Wesley's primary, inclusive understanding of it and to one of his fundamental reasons for discarding it and his lifelong fight against it. Therefore, with a brief preface, what he wrote William Law upon this will be quoted entire.

The preface is the second paragraph of his first extended statement upon mysticism, which he wrote in his letter of November, 1736, to his brother Samuel. It reads: "I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the writings of the mystics; under which term I comprehend all, and only those, who slight any of the means of grace." Inasmuch as both John Wesley and William James report there are as many kinds of mystics as there are mystic books, it is well to hold in mind both the class of mystics and one of the probable major features of all mysticism, which John Wesley discards: that is, "all who neglect the means of grace."

Objecting to Law's counseling a seeker to "wholly leave himself to God" and not to employ any other helps, Wesley said:

But how can a man "leave himself wholly to God" in the neglect of His ordinances? The old Bible way is to "leave ourselves wholly to God" in the constant use of all the means He hath ordained. And I cannot think yet the new is better, though you are fully persuaded it is. "There are two ways," you say, "of attaining goodness and virtue: the one by books or the ministry of men; the other by an inward birth. The former is only in order to the latter." This is most true, that all the externals of religion are in order to the renewal of our soul in righteousness and true holiness. But it is not true that the external way is one and the internal way another. There is but one scriptural way wherein we receive inward grace—through the outward means which God hath appointed.

Some might think that when you advised "not to seek help from books" you did not include the Bible. But you clear up this where you answer the objection of your not esteeming the Bible enough. You say: "How could you more magnify John the Baptist than by going from his teaching to be taught by that Christ to whom he directed you? Now, the Bible can have no other office or power

but to direct you to Christ. How, then, can you more magnify the Bible than by going from its teachings to be taught by Christ?" So you set Christ and the Bible in flat opposition to each other! And is this the way we are to learn of Him? Nay, but we are taught of Him, not by going from the Bible, but by keeping close to it. Both by the Bible and by experience we know that His Word and His Spirit act in connexion with each other. And thus it is that, by Christ continually teaching and strengthening him through the Scripture, "the man of God is made perfect, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work."

According to your veneration for the Bible is your regard for public worship and for the Lord's Supper. "Christ," you say, "is the church or temple of God within thee. There the supper of the Lamb is kept. When thou art well grounded in this inward worship, thou wilt have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, an altar along with thee."

The plain inference is: Thou wilt not need to make any difference between Sunday and other days. Thou wilt need no other church than that which thou hast always along with thee; no other supper, worship, priest, or altar. Be well grounded in this inward worship, and it supersedes all the rest.

This is right pleasing to flesh and blood; and I could most easily believe it if I did not believe the Bible. But that teaches me inwardly to worship God, as at all times and in all places, so particularly on His own day, in the congregation of His people, at His altar, and by the ministry of those His servants whom He hath given for this very thing, "for the perfecting of the saints," and with whom He will be to the end of the world.

Extremely dangerous, therefore, is this other gospel, which leads quite wide of the gospel of Christ. And what must the consequence be if we thus "break," yea, "and teach men so," not "one" only, neither "the least," of "His commandments"? Even that "we shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." God grant this may not fall on you or me!

7. You claim there is "no such place in the universe" as hell. Wesley begins, "Whether we have a place in heaven or not, you are very sure we shall have none in hell. . . . You declare this over and over

again in great variety of expressions." There is "no such place in the universe. . . . Hell is no penalty prepared or inflicted by God. . . . Damnation is only that which springs up within you. . . . Hell and damnation are nothing but the various operations of self."

Having refused to accept hell, Law did accept some such purifying place as purgatory: referring to the virtues, he said, "These virtues must have their perfect work in you, if not before, yet certainly after death. Everything else must be taken from you by fire either here or hereafter."

Affirming there is the vengeance of God, Wesley amplifies:

"And let not any who live and die in their sins vainly hope to escape His vengeance. 'For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished' (2 Pet. ii. 4-9). In that day, peculiarly styled 'the day of the Lord,' they 'that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt' (Dan. xii. 2). Among the latter will all those be found who are now by their obstinate impenitence 'treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness judgment of God; who will' then render 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil' (Rom. ii. 5, 8-9). He hath declared the very sentence which He will then pronounce on all the workers of iniquity: 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt. xxv. 41). And in that hour it will be executed: being 'cast into outer darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth' (verse 30), they 'will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power' (2. Thess. i. 9). A punishment not only without end, but likewise without intermission. For when once 'they are cast into that furnace of fire,' that 'lake of fire burning with brimstone, the worm,' gnawing their soul, 'dieth not, and the fire,' tormenting their body, 'is not quenched.'" So that 'they have no rest day or night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'"

John Wesley ends this letter to William Law with these two paragraphs.

I have now, sir, delivered my own soul. And I have used great plainness of speech; such as I could not have prevailed on myself to use, to one whom I so much respect, on any other occasion.

Oh, that your latter works may be more and greater than your first! Surely they would, if you could ever be persuaded to study instead of the writings of Tauler and Behmen, those of St. Paul, James, Peter, and John; to spew out of your mouth and out of your heart that vain philosophy, and speak neither higher nor lower things, neither more nor less, than the oracles of God; to renounce, despise, abhor all the high-flown bombast, all the unintelligible jargon of the mystics, and come back to the plain religion of the Bible, "We love Him, because He first loved us."

Though no apology is required for this chapter on mysticism in the religious quest of John Wesley—his finding, accepting, examining, and discarding it; and though none is required for the presentation of his letter of 1756 to William Law, yet, with regards to the letter, there is justifiable reason to apologize for its brevity. For those becoming acquainted for the first with mysticism, for those desiring broad and adequate acquaintance with it, and for those desiring to learn more accurately the detail of its inadequacies, the above presentation raises questions but does not discuss them. While the fact of mysticism's discard by a man of the caliber of John Wesley should warn any, who would be Christian, from accepting it; and while enough has been presented to lay adequate foundation for misgivings of it, if not rejection, yet there are certain features which call for more extended exposition and comment to clear out the mind's corners, thus producing assured understanding, rational conviction, and discard of it, full and free.

The meanings of William Law should be systematized more fully and examined more closely. Wesley's arguments should be examined in like fashion. Some do not appear to answer Law. Others are not the strongest rebuttals possible. The sound phases of mysticism should be noted but guarded—its heavy stress on inwardness, its aiming at adequate spiritual knowledge and life, its indwelling Christ. John Wesley admitted frankly, there were "excellent things in most of the mystic writers."⁹ Mysticism's unsound phases should have further exposition and exposure—its wide but elusive departures from good beginnings; its flagrant contradictions; its pervading passivity of God as agent; its

manipulation of God by man's efforts; and the almost total immanence of God, the root of all its errors.

It is an excellent measure of the power and independence of John Wesley's religious genius, that, within four years, he came to understand, by the laboratory tests of his trained and keen and stubborn mind and by the intense and urgent seeking of his soul, the true character of mysticism and to see it as "another gospel."

By 1739, he and Charles were fighting it by screening the hymns of what they judged was "written upon the scheme of the mystic divines." Steadily was this purging pursued. Having finished some poems on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in 1765, Charles Wesley, between 1774 and 1787, revised them eight times. The week before Christmas, 1788, Charles having died the preceding March 29th, John was revising his brother's poems,¹⁰ of which he said: "Some are bad; some mean: some most excellently good. They give the true sense of Scripture, always in good English, generally in good verse. Many of them are equal to most, if not to any, he ever wrote; but some savour still of that poisonous mysticism, with which we were both not a little tainted before we went to America. This gave a gloomy cast, first to his mind, and then to many of his verses. This made him frequently describe religion as a melancholy thing. This so often sounded in his ears, 'To the desert,' and strongly persuaded in favour of solitude."

Such being the subtle character and tenacious persistence of mysticism, it is no wonder that John Wesley fought it all his life, wherever he recognized it, even in his brother's poems. To what his thoroughness in this matter drove him is seen in his letter of July 12, 1782, to Ann Loxdale. It is likely she was contemplating marriage with a man who had some mystic leanings or beliefs, and she wrote to John about her marrying him. He replied, "It is not the will of God that you should on any account whatever contract a near union with any person tinged with mysticism."¹¹

Had John Wesley's faith rested in mysticism, had he not discarded it, doubtless Methodism would never have been born. Certainly, no revival would he have begun.

CHAPTER TWENTY

TO COMPLETE the account of John Wesley's rejection of mysticism, it was necessary to go farther on than the time-end of his quest, the year 1738, or on to 1756. Now we return to the time of his leaving America, join him as he departs, and sail with him back to England, noting some detail of this voyage, his last ocean journey, and following especially his mind and heart in his search for God. The time involved is Friday, December 2, 1737, to and including Wednesday, February 1, 1738—that is, sixty days. Upon the whole, it was a comparatively quiet time for him, in which he took stock of himself religiously.

We left him at Savannah on December 2nd, when he had been forbidden to leave the colony. Realizing this order, along with the facts that he had been arrested but not tried made him "only a prisoner at large," he wrote, "I saw clearly the hour was come for leaving this place; and as soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock, I shook off the dust of my feet, and left Georgia."

"Sat. Dec. 3. We came to Purrysburg early in the morning," John's *Journal* reads. The "we" were John and three others:¹ "Coates, a constable"—a busybody, lazy, rebellious, and in debt; Gough—an idler, impudent, also rebellious and in debt, and a deserter of a wife and child; and Campbell—a barber, loose, pliable, a debtor."² Hurst designates these as Wesley's "friends," but Tyerman comments: "It by no means follows that these vagabonds were Wesley's friends. They seem to have been fugitives as well as he. Misfortune makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows; still, leaving in such company was an ugly fact, and was used to Wesley's disadvantage."³ Equally misleading is the same author's statement that these three "assisted in Wesley's escape." All Savannah knew he was leaving. It is possible there were no charges against them. Moreover, they could have attached themselves to John outside the town at night contrary to his expectations and his will. In view of the journeys he had made, on water and land, since his arrival in Georgia, it is unlikely he sought them even as company. Whatever the circumstances of their presence, there they were.

One of the three "intended to go to England, the other two to settle in Carolina."

At Purrysburg, they found no guide to Port Royal but struck out before sunrise; met an old man who put them on a blazed trail; it ran into a swamp, where they wandered about till nearly two o'clock in the afternoon; found another blind blaze; near sunset sat down exhausted. Into the ground, John thrust a stick, withdrew it, found the end moist; they dug with their hands for three feet, and found potable water. Their only food was a "ginger-bread cake" which John had brought with him. Then they lay down to sleep, which Wesley did till six o'clock in the morning.

December 7th, Beaufort was reached, where the minister, Mr. Jones, gave John "a lively idea of the old English hospitality." The other three disappear here. Charles Delamotte joins John. These two reach Charleston on the 13th. The next day, Wesley read prayers and visited a dying man. On the 16th, Delamotte left for Savannah. The 19th, in spite of a "violent flux," Wesley "had strength enough given to preach once more to this careless people; and a few believed." Thursday, December 22nd, he boarded the *Samuel*, writing, "I took my leave of America (though, if it please God, not for ever)."

Apropos of John's expressed hope to return to America, it should be noted that both brothers, in spite of their hardships in it, were captivated in some deep sense by the New World. Charles, too, fully expected to come back as a missionary. Illness prevented him.⁴ When Methodism in New York City and in Maryland, begun in 1766, grew in number, John Wesley sent there, in 1769, two ministers. English newspapers lampooned the act, saying two "imminent promotions" were "Rev. John Wesley, Bishop of Pennsylvania, and Rev. Charles Wesley, Bishop of Nova Scotia."⁵ John, however, seriously considered returning, writing July 13, 1771, "My call to America is not yet clear. I have no business there as long as they can do without me."⁶ February 1, 1772, he wrote of rumor of his going to become bishop in America and of the fear of some of the preachers he would stay there too long.⁷ Neither office or fear were realized, however.

The day before Christmas, the *Samuel* "sailed over Charles-Town bar, and about noon lost sight of land." All Christmas Day, he was so seasick he had to lie down, "being easy only in that posture." Monday, he was better and "began instructing a Negro lad in the principles of Christianity." Tuesday, he began his "old simplicity of diet," which stabilized both his stomach and his head.

His old fear of death, about which he said little during the Savannah stay, appears again on the 28th: "Finding the unaccountable apprehensions of I know not what danger (the wind being small, and the sea smooth), which had been upon me several days, I cried earnestly for help, and it pleased God, as in a moment to restore peace to my soul."

His Savannah troubles, his arduous journey to Charleston, his flux, upset stomach and aching head might have clouded his understanding of his apprehensions but, in his subsequent diagnosis, their cause is plain:

"Let me observe hereon, 1. That not one of these hours ought to pass out of my remembrance, till I attain another manner of spirit; a spirit equally willing to glorify God by life or death. 2. That whoever is uneasy on any account, (bodily pain alone excepted) carries in himself his own conviction, that he is so far an unbeliever. Is he uneasy at the apprehension of death? Then he believeth not, 'That to die is gain.' At any of the events of Life? Then he hath not a firm belief, That 'all things work together for his good.' And if he bring the matter more close, he will always find, beside the general want of faith, every particular uneasiness is evidently owing to the want of some particular Christian temper."

His "unaccountable apprehensions," then, are any uneasiness regarding dying and any uneasiness regarding the events of living. Either reveals an unbeliever, void of some specific Christian temper. In these respects, the Savannah stay has not furthered him decisively.

Thus closed 1737.

The year 1738 opened well enough with the first services he had aboard ship. Both morning and evening services on New Year's Day were attended by all, except the captain and steersman: and all "appeared as attentive as even the poor people of Frederica did, while the word of God was new to their ears."

Monday, January 2nd, he slumped again, "being sorrowful and very heavy . . . and utterly unwilling to speak close to any of his little flock" of about twenty. For this spirit, he could give no reason but, thinking it might be caused by his not speaking to some of his flock, he went in the evening to instruct the cabin boy and felt "much easier."

He could not bring himself to talk to the sailors upon religion. For several days, he made attempts but found himself "quite averse" to

it, because he "could not see how to make an occasion"—that is, he knew not how to begin. Baffled, he asks, "Is it a prohibition from the Good Spirit? Or a temptation from nature, or the evil one?" Meantime, he employed himself, finishing an abridgment of the life of de Renty and reading and explaining Bible passages to two Negroes and to the only Frenchman aboard.

Thus passed a week; and Sunday, January 8th, came and upon it he drew up this statement of his quest's status:

"In the fulness of my heart I wrote the following words:

"By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,

1. "Of unbelief, having no such faith in Christ, as will prevent my heart from being troubled; which it could not be, if I believed in God, and rightly believed in Him.

2. "Of pride, throughout my past life, inasmuch as I thought I had, what I find I have not.

3. "Of gross irrecollection, inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment; in a calm, not.

4. "Of levity and luxuriancy of spirit, recurring whenever the pressure is taken off, and appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify; but most, by my manner of speaking of my enemies.

" 'Lord save, or I perish!' Save me,

1. "By such a faith as implies peace in life and in death.

2. "By such humility as may fill my heart, from this hour forever, with a piercing uninterrupted sense, I have done nothing hitherto; having evidently built without a foundation.

3. "By such a recollection as may cry to Thee every moment, especially when all is calm. Give me faith or I die: give a lowly spirit; otherwise, it is not agreeable to me to live.

4. "By steadiness, seriousness, *semnotes*,⁸ sobriety of spirit, avoiding, as fire, every word that tendeth not to edifying; and never speaking of any who oppose me or sin against God, without all my own sins set in array before my face."

Old and new are here. The final validity of inner consciousness as witness; pride; remembering God in danger, forgetting Him in safety; evil speaking; unbelief—all are old.

Compared with what he wrote on December 28th, there are here new things, mixed but discernible. The statement of the former is general, impersonal, and depending on himself—"till I attain." This

of January 8th is relentlessly specific and personal of John Wesley. The procedure, "till I attain," is supplanted by this, "Lord save, or I perish!" which is a radical and altogether healthy upturn for John or for anyone. It is not yet complete but it is reckonably present: grave-clothes of self-trust still cling, but the stripping them off has begun: and the hand which will tear away their final shreds is, in time, not far away.

Properly does Wesley unite faith and peace, but his uniting bond is erroneous, mechanical, unreal: faith does not imply peace; but faith alone in only what God in Christ has done for sinners brings justification, and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." He has a sound sense of the inefficacy of his past works, but it is not extended to the present ones yet. Crying every moment to God, in pain or in ease, is hardly true trust but is, certainly, a definite recognition of the proper and adequate area of dependence. "Steady seriousness of spirit" is scarcely the exuberance of joy in the Holy Spirit but is an improvement over mere human "levity and luxuriance of spirit." The quest is inching along.

His innate love of solitude is tested again and found wanting. "On Mon. 9, and the following days, I reflected much on that vain desire, which had pursued me for so many years, of being in solitude, in order to be a Christian. I have now, thought I, solitude enough. But am I therefore the nearer being a Christian? Not if Jesus Christ be the model of Christianity. I doubt, indeed, I am much nearer that mystery of Satan, which some writers affect to call by that name; so near, that I had probably sunk wholly into it, had not the great mercy of God just now thrown me upon reading St. Cyprian's works. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret! Stand thou in the good old paths.'"⁹

A major battle with solitude is noted here. Noted, also, is the fact of John's near defeat. What was it which almost conquered him? The only identification of this foe is his doubt-qualified admission, "I am much nearer that mystery of Satan . . . so near, that I had probably sunk wholly into it. . . ." What is this mystery of Satan?

These points are plain. During this voyage, John has been subject to an unusual heaviness of spirit: "unaccountable apprehensions," "till I attain another manner of spirit," "being sorrowful and very heavy"—these indicate his temper. He is in a defeatist mood. Also it is plain that he is locating himself religiously: he admits he is farther from Christ than he is from something else. Again, it is plain, that he is near sinking entirely into that other something. Upon the question of

the identity of this something, one must note that his designation of it as "that mystery of Satan" is not his own wording but a borrowing from "some writers." What Wesley meant by it might have been either of these possibilities: was he contemplating surrender to High Churchism? to accept mysticism? to turn to Catholicism?¹⁰ to begin his own hermit life apart from any religious group? was he near rejecting his sense of destiny? or was he at the point of quitting his quest?

These last two are favored by his own words; for whatever was tempting him was something less than his present understanding of Christ and His Gospel. The dominant fact of his life from 1725 till now is his religious quest, which is characterized by a growing comprehension of the Gospel of Christ as an inner experience adequate for the kind of life he finds exemplified in Christ. Thus far, the matter is clear. What he did, hidden let it be. The significant fact, both for John Wesley and for us, is: into this something, he did not sink "wholly"; nor, except for a few days,¹¹ did he slump towards it.

He was rescued by reading something in the writings of Cyprian. Living in A.D. 200-258, he was the famous Bishop of Carthage in North Africa. Eighty-two epistles and twelve treatises are credited to him. What it was which helped him, he does not state; but here are some bits which could have been his manna.

"It is a slight thing to have been able to attain anything; it is more to be able to keep what you have attained; even as saving faith itself and saving birth makes alive, not by being received, but by being preserved. Nor is it actually the attainment, but the perfecting, that keeps a man for God. . . . Solomon, and Saul, and many others, so long as they walked in the Lord's ways, were able to keep the grace given to them. When the discipline of the Lord was forsaken by them, grace also forsook them."

"Discipline hath preceded; pardon also shall follow."

Referring to current persecution, he wrote to his people, "It is the first title to victory to confess the Lord under the hands of the violence of the Gentiles. It is the second step to glory to be withdrawn by a cautious retirement, and to be reserved for the Lord. The former is a public, the latter is a private, confession. The former overcomes the judge of this world; the latter, content with God as its judge, keeps a pure conscience in integrity of heart."

His eighth epistle, written to the martyrs and confessors, ends:

"O blessed Church of ours, which the honor of the divine condescension illuminates, which in our own times the glorious blood of martyrs renders illustrious! She was white before in the the works of the brethren; now she has become purple in the blood of the martyrs. Among her flowers are wanting neither roses nor lilies. Now let each one strive for the largest dignity of either honor. Let them receive crowns, either white, as of labours, or of purple, as of suffering. In the heavenly camp both peace and strife have their own flowers, with which the soldier of Christ may be crowned for glory."¹²

It is seen readily, that each of these could have, for John, the double message of situation and of sentiment.

Friday and Saturday, January 13th and 14th, the *Samuel* met a "thorough storm." Beginning from the southwest and changing direction clockwise, the wind "blew a proper hurricane," making it impossible for the helmsman to keep the ship in her course, and it was let drive. "Violent rain" fell. With loud booms, which John likened to "American thunder," the sea broke over the *Samuel*, compelling the shutting of everything tight. During it, John's feelings were these: "I was at first afraid; but cried to God, and was strengthened. Before ten I lay down, I bless God, without fear." Ere the storm ended "about noon" of Saturday, John records, "I had resolved, God being my helper, not only to preach it to all, but to apply the Word of God to every single soul in the ship; and if but one, yea if not one of them will hear, I know my labour is not in vain."

Immediately, his thesis of the testimony of inward feeling gave him this justification of itself: "I no sooner executed this resolution, than my spirit revived; so that from this day I had no more of that fearfulness and heaviness, which before almost continually weighed me down." Then he proceeds to defend such testimony. "I am sensible one who thinks the being in death¹³ an indispensable preparative for being a Christian, would say, I had better have continued in that state; and that this unseasonable relief was a curse not a blessing. Nay, but who art thou, O man, who, in favour of a wretched hypothesis, thus blasphemest the good gift of God? Hath not He himself said, 'This also is the gift of God, if a man have power to rejoice in his labour?' Yea, God setteth his own seal to his weak endeavours, while he thus 'answereth him in the joy of his heart.'"¹⁴ Inward feeling, then, is not a subjective product but God's gift.

The *Samuel* is nearing England now; and, on January 24th, met two outbound ships from which they got the "welcome news" of the nearness of Land's End.

Stirred by this, John's mind "was now full of thought," part of which he wrote down. His purpose and expectation in journeying to Georgia are seen this way: "I went to America, to convert the Indians; but oh! who shall convert me?" He has no answer. Hence, he reviews his religion of works; attempts to persuade himself they have made him "safe"; but, remembering how death looked him in the face, he called his but "a fair summer religion."

It is just here that he states the exact reason for his fear of death. 'In a storm I think, 'What if the Gospel be not true? Then thou art of all men most foolish. For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life? For what art thou wandering over the face of the earth? a dream, a cunningly devised fable?' O who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it? Should I fight against it by thinking, or by not thinking of it? A wise man advised me some time since, 'Be still, and go on.' Perhaps this is best, to look upon it as my cross; when it comes, to let it humble me, and quicken all by good resolutions, especially that of praying without ceasing; and at other times to take no thought about it, but quietly go on in the work of the Lord."

Involved in this statement are four attitudes towards death. The first is referred to in the query, "What if the Gospel be not true?" Before he met the furious ocean storms of his two Atlantic crossings, Wesley believed in the Gospel's revelation concerning death: that beyond it, there was heaven, a glorious place of reality, where was no sin, sickness, sorrow, death, parting; but where were the redeemed departed in possession of that immortality which was more than ample reward for all this life's trials; and where they came face to face with Christ. Certainly, such as rearing and the faith of others could give him, he had: but sometime and somewhere, both unstated, this sureness was replaced by doubt. This dubiety was brought forward by the sea storms, with their probability of immediate death. Facing this, John recalled his arduous life and, unsure of any reward for it or of any immortality after it, was fearful, not of death as the actual dying, but of death as bringing one to no compensation for past suffering and sacrifice. Amidst such circumstances, very proper is the question, "For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life?" Most likely, he felt, exactly as did Saint

Paul at Ephesus, that he had better spent his youth and early manhood in the familiar, customary pleasures of men.¹⁵ Disbelief in heavenly reward bears mostly the fruit of dissipation in pleasure.

To this evil credo, John Wesley could not bring himself, but he did consider seriously the other alternative: regard it as his cross, quietly accept it, and go on. This, of course, is the essence of stoicism.

The fourth of these attitudes peeks over the edges of John's last sentence, in which he is seen as unable to let go of a worthfulness in humility, in good resolves, and in unceasing praying. If there be no future life and reward, why bother about these things, especially about unceasing prayer? Yet John could not let these go. These attitudes, therefore, thus followed, turn back to some form and fullness of the first attitude.

While Wesley thus thought and wrote, the *Samuel* sailed on. By Sunday, January 29th, in the distant offing, they saw Lizard Point, the southernmost projection of Cornwall; somewhere in the Channel, the *Samuel* passed the *Whitaker*, bearing George Whitefield to Georgia; and landed at Deal at 4:30 A.M., Wednesday, February 1, 1738.

John Wesley's Georgia visit was ended.

Many have evaluated his venture. Above, it has been claimed that it was far from an abject failure, and supporting facts have been indicated. In closing this chapter, let us hear his own résumé of what his personal religious quest meant to himself. He wrote of this alone; and since that quest is the theme of this work, it is entirely pertinent. His two paragraphs are:

"This then have I learned in the ends of the earth: That I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is corrupt and abominable, and consequently my whole life (seeing it cannot be, that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit); that alienated as I am from the life of God, I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell; that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide His righteous judgment; that having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope, but that of being justified freely, 'through the redemption that is in Jesus:' I have no hope but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and 'be found

in Him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ: the righteousness which is of God by faith.

"If it be said, that I have faith (for many such things have I heard, from many miserable comforters), I answer, so have the devils—a sort of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the Apostles had even at Cana in Galilee, when Jesus first manifested forth His glory; even then they in a sort believed on Him; but they had not then 'the faith that overcometh the world.' The faith I want is, 'A sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God.' I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially in his epistle to the Romans; that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, 'I live not; but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it (though many imagine they have it, who have it not): for whosoever hath it 'is freed from sin; the whole body of sin is destroyed' in him; he is freed from fear; 'having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.' And he is freed from doubt; 'having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; which Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.'"

These two paragraphs state his judgment upon his quest thus far and his objectives for its future. His judgment is: that he is a child of wrath; that his works, sufferings, and morality, whether taken singly or together, have not atoned for his sins or reconciled him to God; and that there is no hope for him but full justification through the "redemption that is in Jesus," by which he can obtain the "righteousness which is of God by faith." He is well in the clear now: his status before God; his rejection of his good works, sufferings, and morality as atoning in no sense or degree for his sins—these mark a large advance.

His future objectives are quite Pauline: faith, as sure trust in God, that through Christ's merits he will be forgiven and reconciled; faith, which enables Christ to dwell in him; faith, which he knows he has by its freeing him from sin, fear, and doubt—by its giving him peace, rejoicing, and hope—and by the Holy Spirit's witnessing with his

spirit that he is a child of God—and by that same Spirit's pervading his heart with the love of God. While on the ocean, he wrote this prayer-poem:

O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone!
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!
Strange fires far from my heart remove;
My every act, word, thought, be love!¹⁶

Purged of much debris, freed of trust in his own powers, turned to God and Christ alone, he is quite ready for God's next contact.

Having landed at Deal, near Dover in Kent, he dined in the inn, where he read prayers and explained some part of Scripture to a "large company." By evening, he reached Feversham, where also he held service for a "few of those who were called Christians, but indeed were more savage in their behaviour than the wildest Indians he had met." At Blendon, expecting a "cold reception," he stopped to visit Charles Delamotte's folks and was received with great joy.

Friday, February 3rd, he arrived in London and stayed with James Hutton, the bookseller, whose father's home was now his, had been for many years the home of the Wesleys during their London visits.¹⁷ London is to become the center of their work for the next fifty years, and, as though realizing a part of his life's work was closed but a greater work was to begin, he wrote on the evening of this first day in London this broad résumé:

Many reasons have I to bless God, though the design I went upon did not take effect, for my having been carried into that strange land, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I trust He hath in some measure humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart. Hereby I have been taught to beware of men. Hereby I am come to know assuredly, that if in all our ways we acknowledge God, He will, where reason fails, direct our path, by lot or by the other means which He knoweth. Hereby I am delivered from the fear of the sea, which I had both dreaded and abhorred from my youth.

Hereby God has given me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhut. Hereby my passage is

opened to the writings of holy men in the German, Spanish and Italian tongues. I hope too, some good may come to others thereby. All in Georgia have heard the word of God. Some have believed, and begun to run well. A few steps have been taken towards publishing the glad tidings both to the African and American heathens. Many children¹⁸ have learned how they ought to serve God, and to be useful to their neighbour. And those whom it most concerns have an opportunity of knowing the true state of their infant colony, and laying a firmer foundation of peace and happiness to many generations.¹⁹

There is a new quality about this. Breezes, fresh and gusty, blow through it. There is a vastness in it, as that of a landscape seen from an unclouded height. Those powers of religious statesmanship, which began their appearance in John in Georgia, have arrived at maturity, appearing here with their sureness and grasp. While there is much truth in it, there is also a bit of the bumptious in his claims, that all Georgia had heard the word of God; and that now the colony could build upon a firmer foundation. How far John Wesley prepared Georgia for a greater future is not easily measured, but it is quite clear how much Georgia readied him for his future.

Saturday, he imparted to a few friends "some of the reasons which a little hastened" his return to England. They all agreed he should relate them to the Trustees, which he endeavored to do the next day.

The afternoon of Sunday, he preached at the Church of St. John the Evangelist on those "strong words": "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." His report of the congregation's response to the sermon was, "I was afterwards informed, many of the best in the parish were so offended, that I was not to preach there any more." England was no more receptive than Georgia.

Monday, he spent in visiting "many old friends."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THEN CAME "a day much to be remembered." It was Tuesday, February 7, 1738.¹ What made it such a day to John Wesley is recorded in his *Journal* of that date: "At the house of Mr. Weinantz,² a Dutch merchant, I met Peter Böhler, Schulus Richter and Wensel Neiser, just then landed from Germany. Finding they had no acquaintance in England, I offered to procure them a lodging; and did so, near Mr. Hutton's, where I then was. And from this time I did not willingly lose any opportunity of conversing with them, while they stayed in London." Referring nearly three years later to this day, he wrote, "I met Peter Böhler: my heart clave to him as soon as he spoke; and the more we conversed, so much the more did I esteem both him and all the Moravian Church."³ Already are his knowledge of the Moravians and of German rewarding, enabling him to receive an "angel" but not entirely "unawares."⁴ Upon this text in his *Notes on the New Testament*, John commented: "So may an unknown guest, even now, be of more worth than he appears, and may have angels attending him, though unseen."

"Even now" is a phrase which might have been John's reference to that something in Böhler which glowed in his first words and which made his heart cleave to him. It might be, too, his recognition of the providence, discernible in the following facts of history.

Inasmuch as Peter Böhler exerted the most profound evangelical influence upon both the Wesleys of any one they met; and inasmuch as too little is known of him, it is required by truth, heritage and gratitude to present some adequate knowledge about him.⁵

From the viewpoint of his first contacts with the Wesleys, his life divides itself into three periods:

- I. From birth to February 7, 1738.
- II. From February 7, 1738 to May 4, 1738.
- III. From May 4, 1738 to April 27, 1774.⁶

When, as an Oxford student around nineteen years of age, John Wesley was beginning to attend, systematically and formally, to his religious practices, at the same time in Germany in Thuringia, the country of Martin Luther, there entered the University of Jena an eighteen-year-old student, named August Gottlieb Spangenberg. He came to study law. Organized under Reformation auspices in 1557, this university was noted for its adherence to Lutheran doctrine, a fact which had part in turning Spangenberg from law to theology. Therein, he became so able that, when twenty-two years of age, he lectured in that field, probably as a "Magister legens,"⁷ a kind of junior professor. To his special meetings, there came, in 1731, a student named Peter Böhler, nearly four months over eighteen years of age.⁸

Peter Böhler was the son of John Conrad and Antoinette Elizabeth Böhler, residing at Frankfort-on-the-Main, where they kept an inn. There this son was born to them on December 31, 1712. Aged four, he began school; and, aged eight, began the study of Latin, largely the language of the learned. At ten, he entered the Frankfort Gymnasium, with the purpose of studying medicine, but his teachers induced him to devote himself to theology.

"His religious experiences were of a peculiar kind," wrote de Schweinitz. "In his boyhood he had been wild and wicked; at a later time a visit which a clergyman induced him to pay to a woman condemned to death for an attempted murder, who had found the forgiveness of her sins through faith in Christ, made a deep impression upon his heart. He solemnly resolved to do better and began to work for self-reformation, but did not go to the Saviour for pardoning grace. Hence he remained without peace. This discouraged him. He did not return to his wicked ways, but he stopped seeking the Lord. In this frame of mind he came to the university."

There, he arrived at one A.M., April 20, 1731. Then at Jena were several students who had been at the Frankfort Gymnasium, most of whom, like many the Wesleys met at Oxford, "led a riotous life and mocked at religion." However, in connection with the Brethren's Church, there was at the university also an association of Christian students. "Evangelists from Herrnhut were accustomed to come to Jena to encourage and counsel this body of believing young men." It was a kind of Holy Club. A week ere Böhler entered, there came to the school a friend of Böhler's who, "disgusted with the life of the ungodly students, went over to the Christian party." To them, he spoke of the

coming of Böhler and, when the latter reached Jena, though it was one o'clock in the morning, he "found his friend waiting for him at the post-house" and bearing a "pressing invitation from the Christian students to put himself at once into their hands." Not making any promise, he accompanied his friend to the meeting place of these students. The others sought to bring him over to them: "but, although his heart was cold to the influences of religion, he would not yield to such enticements, and had a strong conviction that he ought to cast his lot with the Christian party."

He lodged with a pious clergyman, Deacon Brumhart. Then, "very soon he attended one of the private services held by Spangenberg. . . . One remark of the speaker made a deep impression upon Böhler's heart: 'The Saviour has power to forgive sins.' 'I have tried everything else in the world,' Böhler said to himself, 'but this I have not yet tried. If this is true, I will be happy.' He went to his room determined to call upon Christ for the pardon of his sins, but by a strange perverseness decided not to begin till the first day of the following week. It was Wednesday when he took his resolution. But by Saturday his desire to test the efficacy of the Saviour's power grew so strong that he waited no longer, and at once cast himself with earnest prayer at His feet. In answer to such supplications Christ revealed Himself. He believed, was forgiven, and knew experimentally what he had heard from Spangenberg was true.

"He now devoted himself to the study of theology with zeal and great satisfaction. A life purpose had been revealed to him through the peace of God which filled his soul. He thought no more of the ministry merely as a profession and of theology merely as a science. Both were given him of God. To preach the Gospel was a glorious privilege; to prepare for such work by studying theology was an exalted pleasure. Hence, in addition to his studies he took upon himself the duties of an occasional teacher in the Primary School of Jena, where he had many opportunities of doing good and of promoting the cause of God. From this school, in which he continued to labor during the whole period of his stay at Jena, came several pupils who, in after years, joined the Moravian Church and were active in its service."

Count Zinzendorf visited Jena twice in 1732. Upon the first, Böhler became acquainted with him and "their hearts flowed together as soon as they met." Meantime, Deacon Brumhart had died and Spangenberg had removed, one consequence of which facts was the dwindling

of the Christian association to nine students. These requested Zinzendorf to aid them. In autumn he did, and was so successful, that the group grew to over a hundred theological, legal, and medical students, whose influence was greater than ever. At this visit, Zinzendorf, Böhler, and a third student "entered into a special covenant to the end that they would remain faithful to Christ under all circumstances, and would serve Him with their whole heart till death." The one failed, but not Böhler and Zinzendorf.

Quoting from an "autobiography" of Böhler, Edmund de Schweinitz continues: "'The year 1733,' he writes, 'was an extraordinarily happy one for me, and was spent in a constant intercourse with the Saviour; the foundation of my future work in His service was then laid.'"

Ere he is launched fully upon that work, there is an interlude—a visit to his parents in the spring of 1734, nearly three years after he left for the University of Jena. His parents and sisters found him changed, and he left them changed: "rooted and grounded in the faith, instant for Christ in season and out of season, his influence in the family awakened his folks, bringing them over on the side of Christ."

Directed to do so by his father, he went to the University of Leipzig for a time but soon returned to Jena, where he headed the Association of Christian Students, extended their principles to the city, and became a person of much influence.

Herrnhut he visited first in 1735. The quality of religion there greatly encouraged Böhler, and his sermon converted George Schullius, later a fellow worker of his in the New World. Returning to Jena, he resumed both academic and religious work with such zeal that the first brought him, in 1736, the position of Magister legens and the oversight of the studies of Zinzendorf's son, Christian Renatus. The other bore fruit in an inquiry from Count Zinzendorf, "asking him whether he would enter the service of the Moravian Church, and go to America as pastor of the infant colony established at Savannah, and, at the same time, begin a missionary work among the slaves of South Carolina. Böhler at once accepted the vocation."

September 13th, he held a love-feast with the "whole body of the Jena brotherhood," and on the 14th left for Herrnhut. Here, he remained for two months, preaching in the vacant pulpit at Berthelsdorf. In December, 1737, he was ordained by Zinzendorf and David Nitschmann; and, early in 1738, left for America, by way of England, where

he was met in London by John Wesley on February 7th. Thus, so exact was God's timing, that the two men whom he designed to use in his work He brought together in the same country, in the same city, within two or three days apart. Another bit of divine operation can be seen here. In Georgia, Spangenberg had prepared John Wesley for Peter Böhler: in Germany, he had prepared Böhler for Wesley. God is never behind. When Walt Whitman wrote,

The Lord advances, and yet advances;
Always the shadow in front—always the reach'd hand
bringing up the laggards,

he was repeating Jeremiah's frequent reference to God as "rising early" to send out His messengers. Here is an instance.

Inasmuch as Peter Böhler had a large part in bringing Charles Wesley into the faith; and since the experiences of both brothers with Peter Böhler intertwine from March 4th to the following May 24th, the moves and moods of both should be placed together.

Doing so requires, first, sketching Charles Wesley's life from his departure from Georgia to February 7th. It has been seen that he left Georgia in the summer of 1736 after a stay there of seven months, because of illness, hardship, failure at Frederica, and dislike of some things he had to do as Oglethorpe's secretary, such as writing letters and dealing with the Indian traders. His disgust with the latter he confided to his *Journal* thus: "Today I got their licenses signed by Mr. Oglethorpe, countersigned them myself, and so entirely washed my hands of the traders."⁹ He told the General that continuance of his position meant the "loss of his soul";¹⁰ and resigned on July 25th.

Greatly perturbed at this, Oglethorpe did not accept or reject the resignation but asked him to say nothing about it to the trustees or to do aught else about it, till he should arrive in London, when Charles could select a deputy or resign. Oglethorpe's argument for his request was, "There are many hungry fellows ready to catch at the office, and in my absence I cannot put in one of my own choosing. . . . Perhaps they may send me a bad man; and how far such a one may influence the traders, and obstruct the reception of the Gospel among the heathen, you know."¹¹ Counseling Charles to marry,¹² giving him dispatches to the trustees, and some personal messages to his "particular friends" among them, he was ready to leave. July 26th, he tells, "The words which concluded the lesson, and my stay in Georgia, were, 'Arise, let

us go hence.' Accordingly at twelve I took my final leave of Savannah." It was an arduous voyage: a drunken captain, unconscious for days at a stretch; storms; damage to the ship, and sailing to Boston *en route* made also a long voyage. Parting from John at Charleston on the 5th of August,¹³ he landed at Deal on December 3rd;¹⁴ Saturday night, he reached London.¹⁵ The next morning, he received communion at St. Paul's; heard a report of Oglethorpe's expected arrival; and delivered his despatches to Mr. Vernon, one of the trustees, who received him "very affectionately, and pressed him to stay at his home."

What Charles Wesley was as a seeker is seen by what he said of himself sixteen days after his landing in England, or December 18th, which was his birthday: "I began my twenty-seventh year in a murmuring, discontented spirit; reading over and over the third of Job."¹⁶ That chapter is Job's natal threnody, part of which is, "Let the day perish wherein I was born. . . . Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. . . . Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. . . . Why died I not from the womb? . . . Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery? . . . Why is light given to a man whose way is hid . . .?" For a man like Job, who suddenly became poor, bereaved and ill, such passions are bad enough: how much more reprehensible are they to one who is fairly healthy, young, educated, and talented! His perusing the chapter "over and over" indicates his deriving some inverted pleasure in it, such as is marked in Proverbs 27:7, "The full soul loatheth a honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

His mood was no different the next month, when, on the 22nd, his disclosure of his inner man is, "I called upon Mrs. Pendarves, while she was reading a letter of my being dead.¹⁷ Happy for me, had the news been true! What a world of misery it would save me!" Again, he turns to poetry for expression—not to another poet, but writes his "Hymn for Midnight." A few of its six-line stanzas are:

When midnight shades the earth o'erspread,
And veil the bosom of the deep,
Nature reclines her weary head
And Care respire and Sorrows sleep:
My soul still aims at nobler rest,
Aspiring to her Saviour's breast.

Fain would I leave this earth below,
 Of pain and sin the dark abode;
 Where shadowy joy or solid wo,
 Allures or tears me from my God;
 Doubtful and insecure of bliss.
 Since death alone confirms me His.

Absent from Thee, my exiled soul
 Deep in a fleshy dungeon groans;
 Around me clouds of darkness roll.
 And labouring silence speaks my moans:
 Come quickly, Lord, Thy face display
 And look my midnight into day.

Error and sin and death are o'er,
 If Thou reverse the creature's doom;
 Sad Rachel weeps her loss no more,
 If Thou the God, the Saviour, come:
 Of Thee possess'd, in Thee we prove
 The light, the life, the heaven of love.¹⁸

One notes, at once and approvingly, the clearly running cadence of these lines and their accurate, dignified tone.

Notice, also, that there is a wide difference between Job's birthday wish and Wesley's midnight hymn: the unrelieved darkness and resentful despair are not the spirit of this hymn. Thomas Jackson estimated it as "strikingly descriptive of his defective creed and gloomy feelings."

Gloomy feelings there are. Night's mid-hour suited his mood. His naming the earth as the "dark abode" of pain and sin, whose joy was "shadowy" and whose woe was "solid," recalls Robert Burns' picture of his life as composed of "some drops of joy with draughts of ill between";¹⁹ Wesley, however, has no eager, expectant looking to night, or to aught else in nature, for the expected satisfaction of the "delicate fellowship" of her "secrecies," as did another poet, Francis Thompson.²⁰ Charles knew his "exiled soul deep in a fleshy dungeon groaned," because he was "absent from God."

Defective, his creed was in two points. The one is in the last two verses of stanza three,

Doubtful and insecure of bliss,
 Since death alone confirms me His.

These state his acceptance, consciously or not at this time, of the Calvinistic decrees—that is: God decrees some people will be damned; others will be saved; but none can know his own status until after death. Under such a creed, is it any wonder he was, and could be any otherwise than, “doubtful and insecure of bliss?” How effectively such a doubt begets insecurity and hopelessness for the eternal future, and robs worth from self-sacrifice and altruistic service, is patent. It is against this background that one must understand the rise, the range, and the power of personal and inner knowing one is accepted of God through Christ, which figured so largely in historic Methodism. Though he should have, at this point, Charles Wesley does not appear to know, as does his brother, of the Pauline double testimony of Romans 8:16: or, if he does know, he is giving it no credence. Soon now, he will meet the Gospel of which that is a part and will resist it.

His second error is positing any help in the indwelling God, as the three final lines of his sixth stanza show. Yet he is not understanding that inner divine presence in the sense of William Law’s teaching—that by creation, Christ is in every man. Like his brother’s, his aim is right, but he knows nothing of the covenanted means to it.

The last two lines of his third stanza reveal his acquaintance with more of the book of Job than its third chapter. Most everyone knows of Job’s afflictions, but few appear to know how God relieved him. Chapter 42, verses 5 and 6 read, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” So spoke Job to God. God answered none of Job’s questions but, in some untellable way, met all of them by a disclosure of Himself in which Job saw God. The result was that the man, who all along had asserted his integrity before men, was brought, without a word, to see his unworthiness, to abhor his unworthy self, and to repent. Therefore, amidst his soul turbulence, Charles Wesley appropriately prayed,

Come quickly, Lord, Thy face display,
And look my midnight into day.

Though the person by whom he will learn the way by which his prayer can be answered is unknown to him as yet, encouragement is at hand in the visit of Count Zinzendorf to England. Born May 26, 1700, Zinzendorf became by 1732 one of the leaders of the Moravian Brethren at Herrnhut. He arrived in London in January, 1737. The

purpose of his visit was to consult clerical leaders on the validity of the Moravian clergy's ordinations, since he was being urged to accept episcopal ordination. Assured of such validity by the Bishop of Oxford and the Archbishop of Canterbury, he left on March 6th.

Undoubtedly, through the Georgia Moravians, Wesley and Zinzendorf knew of each other. It is not surprising, therefore, that when they first met in London, on January 19th, Charles could describe their meeting this way: "When I came, he saluted me with all possible affection, and made me promise to call every day."²¹ The next day, distressed Charles Wesley wrote this kind of a letter to the Count, "I wrote and delivered my own state in a letter to the Count."²² On the 23rd, he was at Zinzendorf's home. During his stay in London, the Count allowed religiously earnest persons to attend his family worship; and the attendance was considerable. For the guidance of these folks, he drew up five regulations, which stated their use of the Scriptures; their modes of association; their open frankness with each other; their pledge to serve one another; and their three supreme aims: "To become saved and sanctified by the blood of Jesus, and to love each other cordially."²³ It was this meeting Charles attended. The spirit of it so moved him that, he said, he felt he was "in a choir of angels."²⁴

Zinzendorf "much pressed" him to return with him to Germany. It was no new idea, John having decided in Georgia to do so. Charles was eager to go but never did: his brother went in the summer of 1738. "Much conversation" he had with Zinzendorf on February 6th; and, at parting, the Count "kissed and blessed" him. Ere leaving for Oxford the next day, Charles asked the Count's prayers. In three days, he was back in London, talking again over his visit to Germany: and, when Charles was to leave for Tiverton to visit Samuel, on February 20th, he took leave of the Count, who, he wrote, "bade me not despair; and dismissed me with his blessing."²⁵

It is to be noted that, as Jackson says, even though "Charles laid aside all reserve, and disclosed to the Count, both in conversation and in writing, his most secret thoughts and feelings, at the same time soliciting spiritual counsel," Zinzendorf gave him encouragement but no help. This judgment assumes all is known of what Zinzendorf said and did. From a letter soon to be read, nothing occurred which altered Charles Wesley's confidence in Zinzendorf. The Count was to be, indirectly, an agent in the process of bringing to Wesley the help he needed; for, ordained at Berlin on May 20th, he ordained Peter Böhler and sent him, on December 16, as a missionary to the

areas of Georgia and Carolina by way of England. Upon the human side, Böhler would be the hill from which divine aid for both Wesleys was to come. God moves sometimes in mysterious ways: but He moves! Gloomy in feeling, defective in creed, unsatisfied in soul, and incessant in search he was, but Charles was not idle in his religious practices: publicly and privately, he was zealous. While traveling in coaches, he spoke to the passengers; read devotional books to them; and endeavored to convince them of the importance and nature of religion. Likewise did he in homes, as that of the Delamotte family and of their vicar, Reverend Henry Piers.²⁶

Moreover, he persisted in his quest for someone who could aid him. Five years ago, in the summer of 1732, his brother John had visited William Law; and in this summer of 1737 Charles did so twice, with the results given above. The character of his reception by Law might have recalled to him the words of Job, "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all"; but his summary of the experience is, "I talked at large upon my state with Mr. Law, at Putney. The sum of his advice was, 'Renounce yourself, and be not impatient.'" With these visits, as John did nearly a year ago, he turned finally away from William Law, the mystic.

Where can he go? Here again occurs the curious fact that Charles Wesley did not consult George Whitefield for help. Yet, at this time, Whitefield's preaching was drawing great crowds, composed of the high and the low. The month before Charles first visited Law, Whitefield preached in Bristol on the subject, "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Christ Jesus in Order to Salvation." It was his first published sermon, a fact giving weight to the later testimony of its preacher, "The doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith in Jesus Christ (though I was not so clear in it as afterward) made its way like lightning into the hearers' consciences."²⁷ Surely, by either or both the printed sermon and report, Charles Wesley could have heard of his doctrine and of its results: but, apparently, he did not. Was he too ill to care? Was he unable to recognize that it was what he needed? Was mysticism occupying him too much yet? One wonders.

Wonder again one does as he reads this letter of Wesley's sent to Zinzendorf on November 26, 1737:

After wandering through all the miseries of passion, I would fain turn at last to thee, to myself, and to God. It would be superfluous to write of my affection. But I send a few words on the

matter. While I hung back and struggled, the Lord snatched me away and tore me with violence from my idol. In grief and despair I flung away the yoke of Christ defiantly, and lay for a long time in sin, having no hope and without God. At last, with difficulty and hesitation, I seem to be rising again. I would once more play the warrior and force my way into freedom. May thy prayers and the prayers of the community at Herrnhut accompany me. . . . Pray God on my behalf that I may be willing to be free, that I may thirst for Him alone, that I may fulfill my ministry.²⁸ . . . It seems that the Spirit of God is moving here over the face of the waters. Would that it might reach me, even me! Would that I might be in Christ a new creature! That this may at last be granted to your prayers, which will avail much, you will persevere unweariedly. God does not hear sinners. I would fain be changed from what I am, that I may be heard in the same way on your behalf.

This letter bares to view the status of Charles Wesley's quest in the end of 1737. There are three parts to it.

The first characterizes part or whole of his past life as a "wandering through all the miseries of passion." This dominating feeling centered in an undefined idol,²⁹ not even indicated here, because, as his term "superfluous" tells, he had identified it to the Count in a former letter.³⁰ His turning from Christ suggests it was something which was opposed to his Christian principles as he then understood these. Whatever it was, whenever it occurred, or however long it reigned, it had a powerful grasp upon him: the tenacity of its grip upon him glares from his phrases, "tore me with violence from my idol" and its subsequent "grief and despair."

The passion of his reaction was equally vigorous. He "flung away the yoke of Christ defiantly, and lay for a long time in sin." How far this fact and how much of it is a poet's vivid emotion, one would like to measure more exactly: lacking means for such measurement, just judgment is difficult. In what sin did he lie? Rebellion over the loss of his idol? Or some evil deeds, expressive of that spirit? His adverb, "defiantly," could mean either. Plainly, it was a soul-shaking time, the abyss-period in his life.

Thirdly, now, in November, he is "rising again." This incipient ascent occurs under duress and with hesitation but, nonetheless, it is a recovering. Upturn is due, in part, to himself: in part, was due to

the current visitation, abetted by Whitefield's preaching, of the Divine Spirit upon England's populace. "Would that it might reach me, even me!"⁸¹ he exclaims, meaning it has not made him yet a new creature in Christ. The present "moving over the face of the waters" of the Spirit has raised Charles Wesley's aspirations but has not enlightened him of the first step to their realization.

Consequently, this is his procedure:

"I would fain turn at last to thee, to myself and to God."

And:

"I would once more play the warrior and force my way into freedom."

His turning to Zinzendorf is not unusual, since seeking in and through men formed a large part of the Wesleys' quests. Nor is such seeking mere reliance upon the human, but the Wesleys' persistent doggedness in this area of search evidences their sound religious genius. The Lord might strike down a man upon a road: but, before it, there went the courage for controversy, the clarity of mind amidst controversy, the prayer of pardon, and the heaven-lit face of Stephen; and, after it, there was a fearing but obeying Ananias to channel to him his sight. John Wesley has been seen as turning steadily to books and men: neither satisfied him entirely; nor did either disappoint him completely. And Charles, in spite of William Law's brusquerie, returned to him, and now he clings to Count Zinzendorf. Later, John will say, God worked always through human agents. The present fact, unknown to them both, is that the Lord, who watched over Paul's path, is, even in this end of 1737 and beginning of 1738, bringing to their aid his human but redeemed, prepared, and consecrated servant.

That Charles said he "fain would turn to himself" could be construed to mean it was his way of saying he now realized that what he sought was something inner and personal. At least, this is a kind construction to put upon his words. A commendable interpretation of it would be to assert, he meant he was going to rely less upon others and more upon himself. The more patent and logical understanding of it lies in his resolve, "I would once more play the warrior and force my way into freedom." Taken as it plainly is, the import of his statement is that he is turning to his own power: he, Charles Wesley, will take the kingdom by violence! His phrase, "once more," indicates

he had made such vigorous assault of the Gospel's fortress before; and it implies his failure then. His present resolution proves he failed to learn the lesson of that past defeat. Now again, he will fail. Then, one day, this warrior spirit will burst out, as "inspiring as the blast of the bugle,"³² in that sixteen-stanza Methodist reveille, "Soldiers of Christ, Arise!" Then, its author, in relation to the Gospel and the Lord, will be in place to draw the sword of the spirit and win. Now, in November, 1737, with reference to his finding Christ, all is misplaced and futile. He does not realize the Preacher's truth, "Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him"³³—that is, in the ordered divine world, things sound in themselves, when mistimed and misplaced, are unsound in effect and beget wretchedness.

Askew and wretched he might be in point of method, yet he has quite and true ideas of what his objectives ought to be: freedom, a willingness to be free, thirst for God alone, fulfillment of his life's work, being changed from what he is and becoming a new creature in Christ—each is integral in the Gospel. Experience of them is blocked by his inability to be willing to be free—that is, he cannot bring himself to wholehearted desire to be made what he ought to be made. He is farther on than Saint Paul: he said, "to will is present with me, but how to perform . . . I find not"—that is, he admits the impotence of his own will-power but knows no other for a while: but Charles recognizes that impotence, knows there is an effective power, yet is not fully willing to submit to its operation.

Experience is blocked, too, by his utter disbelief in his own praying, because he is a sinner and God does not hear sinners. Has he not noticed, or forgotten, or is he too proud to use the highly approved publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? Yet he has faith in Zinzendorf's prayers, and pleads with him to "persevere unweariedly" in them on his behalf. In down-to-earth fashion, reminiscent of Paul's Epistle to Philemon, Charles adds that when, in response to Zinzendorf's prayers, he is changed, his prayers for the Count will be effective.

After ten years of seeking by Charles, and after thirteen by John, these brothers find themselves, late in 1737 and early in 1738, as delineated above. There are similarities in their quests but not a great deal of evident interdependence. The large difference is in the range of the search of each, John's being far more wide and deep than that of Charles. In both cases, the major fact is their unflagging persistence:

if sincerity was ever tested by tenacity, theirs was and it passed the testing. The results might appear to some to be meager, but only to superficial insight. God is grinding fine—some of the finest He has ever done: the true Gospel manna is appearing, little by little but surely.

And, near at hand now, is the rewarding end to the seeking of both brothers. The time period involved is February 7–May 24, 1738. Into its events we now enter.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

"MY WHOLE SOUL is now in London and Oxford. My heart goes out to the Saviour; of particular consequence to me now is: God manifest in the flesh. This great mystery of godliness is worthy of it, that we should confess it. This encourages me to extol this God and confess him openly also to Englishmen," wrote Peter Böhler to Zinzendorf from Amsterdam, Holland, on January 24, 1738.¹ His zeal has its spring in his experience of the mystery of godliness;² and, having made him completely willing to leave for America, it makes him eager to witness to it unto Englishmen.

Through letters from America and England, and mostly through the contacts of Zinzendorf with England and the visits to Herrnhut of Englishmen whom the Count invited, he well knows the religious temper of certain parts of England, centering in Oxford and London.

Such is the man whom John Wesley met in London on February 7, 1738. Having found lodging for him near the house where he himself was rooming, Wesley lost no opportunity of talking over religious matters with Böhler. "I conversed much with Peter Böhler," he said, "but I understood him not; and least of all when he said, 'My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away.'"³ Apparently, the newcomer has kept his vow to be instant in and out of season and has confronted John already with the Gospel's first steps. What he meant will be seen further on: at present, it needs to be noted only, that, after several days of talk, both in Latin and in German, John Wesley had no understanding of what Peter Böhler meant. However, to John's credit are the facts that he did not oppose what Böhler witnessed to him; and that, with this man who spoke a religious language he did not comprehend, he continued to keep company.

From the time John reached London until February 15th, he was detained in London, because of the urgency of making his report to the Georgia trustees. Part of this was due to his desire to explain his abrupt departure from Georgia without even notifying the trustees,

much less securing their consent. On the 4th, he laid "some of the reasons" before a few friends, all of whom agreed he should do the same before the trustees. The 5th and 8th, he could not secure a hearing with Oglethorpe: but, on the latter date, he gave a verbal report to the trustees, which he presented to them and answered the questions they asked.

These duties done, he could write, "Fri. 17, I set out for Oxford with Peter Böhler." Charles was there. Böhler was eager to get to Oxford. And John had no further plans than to spend his life at Oxford. He might not know it, but that plan has been changed by meeting the man traveling with him. In the town, they were received "kindly" by Mr. Sarney, the only one left there of the group who "were used to take sweet counsel together, and rejoice in bearing the reproach of Christ."

The next day, Charles went to Stanton-Harcourt to see John Gambold, one of the Holy Club, and his sister Kezzy who was visiting him. John and Böhler also went thither. This is the first meeting of the brothers since their parting at Charleston, Carolina, August 5, 1736. John has no mention of it in his *Journal*, but his brother recorded: "My brother met us. We prayed and sung together."⁴ Neither has he aught about Kezzy, who most likely was well. Of Gambold, John reports, "We . . . found my old friend recovered from his mystic delusion, and convinced that St. Paul was a better writer than either Tauler or Jacob Böhme." Böhler saw him as a mystic.⁵

This same day, the three returned to Oxford, either riding horseback or walking, and talking. The latter, Böhler thus reports: "On February 28th, I travelled with the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley. . . . The elder, John, is an amiable man; he acknowledges that he does not yet rightly know the Saviour and suffers himself to be instructed. He loves us⁶ sincerely. His brother, with whom you conversed frequently in London a year ago, is greatly troubled in spirit and knows not how he shall begin to know the Saviour. Our preaching to learn to believe in the Saviour is for the English quite too easy, so that they cannot accomodate themselves thereto; if it were somewhat more artificial, they would more readily find their way into it. The best among them, especially the students, speak of scarcely anything but following Christ; however, of *faith* in Him they have only that idea which men generally entertain, namely, that one imagines this grace—persuades oneself to possess it. Hence they always take it for granted that they already believe and would prove their faith by works, and plague and torment themselves, that one really mourns [for them] in heart."⁷

Here, for the first time,⁸ is a description of the religious status of the Wesleys by one younger than either but more advanced than both, who is the greater, able to bless the lesser.⁹ He saw John as amiable, quite composed on the surface, frank in his admission he does not know Christ, and equally frank in his submission to instruction. Charles, he diagnosed as deeply perturbed and ignorant of the very rudiments of the way to knowing Christ. Soon, he will find how unteachable he was.

The root difficulty with both was, Böhler said, their inability to lay hold of the simplicity of the Gospel's first steps. That simplicity, he put in these phrases: "our preaching to learn to believe in the Saviour."¹⁰ There is true Gospel detail in this. First, Christ is Saviour; next, one believes or has faith in Him as Saviour; then, one learns this faith—these are the first steps. By these, anyone, however sinful he is and in whatever sense he is sinful, can experience that first essential of salvation—that is, justification or pardon, or forgiveness. Then only can one talk properly of following Christ, as Böhler found the religious students of Oxford improperly talking—that is, beginning with Christ as example instead of Saviour. So beginning, Böhler saw they had no conception of the first object of faith nor of the quality and character of it but, imagining or supposing they had it, they began to prove its possession by the good works they did and by the strict devotions they practiced. Both added up to torment. To believe aright, they had to learn to have faith, first, in Christ as their Saviour. Eleven days after his arrival in London, Peter Böhler has diagnosed the religious cases of the Wesleys correctly; he knows the remedy; and he will administer it. He will persevere and, in their cases, will win.

From Stanton, they returned to Oxford by evening, going to Mr. Sarney's, where what transpired Charles recorded laconically; "In the evening I prayed at Mr. Sarney's, with some scholars and a Moravian."

February 20th, John came to London, but Peter Böhler remained in Oxford, where he will remain till March 10. We will stay with him. That same day, he began to learn English from Charles and made such progress in it that, by May 4th, he could say, "I heard John Wesley preach. I could now understand everything."¹¹

Things other than the English language occupied Charles Wesley and Peter Böhler at Oxford; for, on February 22nd, Charles entered this in his *Journal*: "I had some close conversation with Peter Böhler, who pressed upon our scholars the necessity of combining; and instanced in many awakened, but fallen asleep again for want of it. He talked

much of the necessity of prayer and faith." The fact that he called such generalities "close conversation" discloses how far Charles Wesley was even from beginning to apprehend Böhler's teaching or how much, one may properly suspect, he was opposed to what the Moravian believed.

Toothache began an illness which gave Peter Böhler his first half-opportunity. Let the sufferer tell his own story:

"Feb. 24th. At six in the evening, an hour after I had taken my electuary,¹² the tooth-ache returned more violently than ever. I smoked tobacco ["the abominable remedy of a pipe,"¹³ he called it], which set me vomiting, and took away my senses and pain together. At eleven I waked in extreme pain, which I thought would quickly separate soul and body. Soon after Peter Böhler came to my bed-side. I asked him to pray for me. He seemed unwillingly at first; but beginning very faintly, he raised his voice by degrees, and prayed for my recovery with a strange confidence. Then he took me by the hand, and calmly said, 'You will not die now.' I thought within myself, 'I cannot hold out in this pain till morning. If it abate before, I believe I may recover.'

"He asked me, 'Do you hope to be saved?' 'Yes.' 'For what reason do you hope it?' 'Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God.' He shook his head, and said no more. I thought him very uncharitable, saying in my heart, 'What, are not my endeavours a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavours? I have nothing else to trust to.'"¹⁴

The pleuritic fever continued for three days unabated. Two doctors attended him, the one, Dr. Manaton, telling Charles afterward he did not expect to see him alive at his second visit.

Peter Böhler has gained ground with Charles Wesley. Ten days ago, to Charles, Böhler was a "Moravian"; next, a student of English; then, a partner in close conversation; now, a Christian brother who prays for him; and, after that, a Christian, faithful and courageous, who in spite of his near-fatal illness, challenges his preparation for the other world. There are those who would resent Böhler's close talk as needlessly endangering the patient's health; and others, who would oppose scaring the sufferer with any least allusion to death. Both would regard Böhler as unwise and heartless. Not so, however. The sick man asked him to pray for him. Even at that, sensing the patient's opposition to him, the visitor was reluctant to respond. In his prayer,

the petitioner "prayed for the salvation of the soul and body"¹⁵ of Charles Wesley, and received the answer that the ill man would not die. So assured, Peter Böhler threw the weight of any hesitancy on the Lord's side and spoke.

What Augustus Spangenberg's four questions were to John Wesley on his third day in the New World, Peter Böhler's two questions and negative headshake were to Charles Wesley on the Moravian's seventeenth day in England. Their effect upon Wesley, he himself says in the brief record, "I thought him very uncharitable." Help in bodily illness was requested: rejected was help in obtaining eternal life. Charles' regarding his own endeavors as a "sufficient ground of hope" measures his ignorance of the Gospel: his resistance to deprivation of that hope reveals his dire need of some religious value to which to cling.

Having ploughed a bit in the field of Charles Wesley's soul, Peter Böhler was silent. Other powers were active, producing a profound, thorough inventory of spiritual and religious stock. The patient becomes the poet, and he reports the results in two grand poems. These allow us to see the other side of the man who felt so meanly about the humble Christian whom he asked to pray for him and, therefore, for this corrective, for their poetry; and for their baring the soul of Charles Wesley at this time in his quest, they command a hearing.

The one captioned, "Written in the Beginning of a Recovery from Sickness," opens its eight stanzas with this:

Peace, fluttering soul! the storm is o'er,
 Ended at last the doubtful strife:
 Respiring now, the cause explore,
 That bound thee to a wretched life.

The purpose of the poem appears in the clause, "the cause explore." It means he is asking why his life has been spared. Wretched it was: wretched it is: suffering has not altered his spiritual status. His last phrase recalls the third chapter of Job, which he read and reread on his birthday in 1736, where Job inquired, "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery?"

That being his purpose, this is the result:

When on the margin of the grave
 Why did I doubt my Saviour's art?
 Ah! why mistrust His will to save?
 What meant that faltering of my heart?

'Twas not the searching pain within
That fill'd my coward flesh with fear;
Nor conscience of uncancell'd sin;
Nor sense of dissolution near.

Of hope I felt no joyful ground,
The fruit of righteousness alone;
Naked of Christ my soul I found,
And started from a God unknown.

Corrupt my will, nor half-subdued,
Could I His purer presence bear?
Unchanged, unhallow'd, unrenew'd,
Could I before His face appear?

This exploration of the cause which bound him to a wretched life omits entirely any reference to the intercessory prayer of Peter Böhler and to his statement that Wesley would not die. Inasmuch as he himself had requested the prayer, one is almost driven to conclude that request was but a mere formality, containing little more of expectation than the frequent and trite admission that it can do no harm.

The ground-tone of his soul was fear. It filled his coward flesh. Yet it was not fear of physical pain—the “recent horrors,” the “strong redoubled agonies,” as he named it in the next poem. Neither was it fear of death, the sense of dissolution near. Nor was it any conscience of uncanceled sin. At this point, he differed from Robert Burns, who, in the second of his “Prayers in the Prospect of Death,” made this confession of his fear and its cause:

For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.¹⁶

This is Charles Wesley's early use of the truth of one of his best and widest-known lines: “He breaks the power of cancelled sin.” The coming May, Peter Böhler will say to him, “If I had a thousand tongues, I'd praise Christ will all of them”¹⁷—a testimony which Charles Wesley, the next year, will put with this other in one of the greatest evangelical hymns. Viewing this early statement from the later hymn, one is surprised at his denial of any uncanceled sin

in his life in 1738: but, when he remembers Wesley's trust in his own works, surprise lessens.

His fear, he claimed, was due to his realization of his soul's destitution. Serious illness made death imminent. In turn, this compelled him to face the fact of his confronting God in the beyond. God's "purer presence," he could not bear; nor appear "before his face." Confronting such an experience, he had no hope, knew not God, and was "naked of Christ." These generated fear, faltering, doubt of Christ's power to heal, and mistrust of Christ's will to do so. In all this, there is a poet's profusion and confusion; but these admissions, not so complete but as briefly blunt as St. Augustine's, must be the data by which one assays Charles Wesley's state now.

Such assay must admit that the root of Charles' spiritual disturbance lies in his line, "Naked of Christ my soul I found." This confession necessitates its counterpart, that Christ was sufficient for all his needs in the advent of death. Without Christ, he is "unchanged, unhallow'd, unrenew'd": but, with Him, he both could be and would be changed, hallowed, and renewed.

Assay must admit, too, that his given reason why he was naked of Christ is in the line, "Corrupt my will, nor half-subdued." The first part of this line reveals the poet's confusion; for, if it be true, how could he say he had no conscience of uncanceled sin? His confession that his will was not "half-subdued" lays bare the final cause of many a failure to reach joyous, strong, fruitful, rewarding, and victorious Christian experience and living. Christ had to surrender to His Father's will: He put it in His pattern of prayer—Thy will be done in earthy me, as it is done in those in heaven. In this, the servant is to be as His Master. Charles Wesley declares he was not there, nor even halfway there. What else, then, can he expect but what he now experiences?

Most likely, it was Count Zinzendorf who drew Charles Wesley's attention to the significance and power of one's will; for, in his *Journal* for Sunday, February 6, 1737, Wesley made this entry:

"I had much conversation with the Count. Some of his words were, 'The Christian cannot yield to sin; but must conquer it, if he will.' Speaking of his own case, he said, he and a lady were in love with each other; till, finding something of nature, he resolved to renounce her; which he did, and persuaded her to accept of his friend. 'From that moment,' said he, 'I was freed from all self-

seeking; so that for ten years past I have not done my own will in anything, great or small. My own will is hell to me. I can just now renounce my dearest friend, without the least reluctance, if God require it.'"¹⁸

Zinzendorf's phrase, "if he will," is to be taken as meaning what his two final sentences say—that is: self-will alone is hell, but self-will renounced for God's will is power. Something of this emphasis upon the will appeared earlier in Chapter Twenty, in Charles' request of the Count that he would pray the writer might "be willing to be free." Then, apparently, Charles Wesley's will was not in accord with his objective. Now, four months later, the power of the will in attaining the objective is the theme, which power comes to one who surrenders his will to God's. This, Charles is not doing even halfway: therefore, in Saint John's language, he is by no means "born of God" and is not half-born of the "will of man."¹⁹ Pace of the snail, it is; but it is, nonetheless, a pace.

Whether or not it aids anyone in his seeking, it will allow all a better understanding of the quests of the Wesleys to compare and to contrast their responses to imminent death.

1. There is a disparity in time in their initial awareness of death. John came to his awareness of it in the earlier 1730's, when he took stock of the bearing of his years of pious practice and doing good upon his fear of death and found they gave him neither aught of comfort or whit of assurance of his acceptance with God. His brother, most likely, shared the general apprehension during the storms on the voyage to Georgia; but, since he did not begin his *Journal* till March 9, 1736, there is no such record of his feelings. The following August, upon the long voyage home, he was in both sea storms and in a storm of sickness: but the former aroused no great fears; and, though in the latter he was attended at Boston by three or four physicians and seems to have expected his end, death caused no unusual disturbance but what was allayed by his reading Pascal's prayer in affliction.²⁰ It is certain, however, that by the time of this illness of February, 1737, he is possessed thoroughly with the fear of death and has his reasons for that fear quite definitely in mind.

2. Their responses display slight dissimilarities. Fear of death "not a little surprised" John and gave Charles "that faltering of my heart." It showed John that he was "unwilling to die"; and Charles admitted

it "fill'd my coward flesh with fear." It revealed John to himself as "unfit"; Charles, to himself as "naked of Christ." John, at this self-disclosure, was "much ashamed," but his brother evinced no such feeling. The older brother awakened to the fact that Christ was the only foundation upon which to build. The younger had accepted Christ as fundamental in the whole case, but had doubts of His "art"—that is, power—to save him and mistrusted His will to do so.

3. This general observation must be made and marked: awareness of death kept alive, intensified, deepened, and largely advanced the religious quests of both the Wesleys.

These encounters with every person's "last enemy"²¹ do not add up to morbidity—that is, an unbalanced preoccupation with the end of this life and its attendant circumstances upon the earthly or heavenly banks of the river of death. Truly, it is the scientific approach. The essence of such approach is the gathering of all available data and accurate fact upon any subject as necessary to their proper classification and to the understanding of their true bearing upon the matter in hand, as indicating or certifying how that matter is to be handled effectively and constructively. Religion's proper field is man's life. Among many, one of the most patent, certain facts in it is death. To accept this fact, to dare to face it, to investigate man's natural attitude toward it, to ascertain its revealed actualities, and to obtain from them the maximum values for men—this, within the proper area of religion, is as scientific as the investigation, in the created world, of atomic energy. Such investigating, both Wesleys have begun to do, and the benefits of its awakening, self-judging, directing, and stimulating powers are beginning to accrue to them.

His first poem, like his second, following his frank self-diagnosis, concludes with a prayer for the changing, hallowing, and renewing of the poet himself:

Father of mercies, hear my call!
 Ere yet return the fatal hour;
 Repair my loss, retrieve my fall,
 And raise me by Thy quick'ning power.

My nature re-exchange for Thine;
 Be Thou my life, my hope, my gain;
 Arm me in panoply divine,
 And death shall shake his dart in vain.

The prayer of the second poem comprises ten of its seventeen stanzas and answers the second of the two questions he asks himself in its two opening lines:

And live I yet by power divine?
And have I still my course to run?

The first records his recovery and acknowledges the power which restored him. It was "mercy heard his speechless prayer"; Jesus who to "his deliv'rance flew"; and "Almighty Power" which turned the fever's "backward course." Writing to Zinzendorf of this illness, Peter Böhler informed him, "He recognizes that it comes from God, the pain as well as the relief from the same."²²

The second query looks ahead and, in the light of the awakening power of this close contact with death, he disposes of his future. It is such an excellent prayer of personal consecration, so New Testament and so Methodistic, that it is given here:

God of my life, what just return
Can sinful dust and ashes give?
I only live my sin to mourn,
To love my God I only live.

To Thee, benign and saving Power,
I consecrate my lengthened days;
While mark'd with blessings, every hour
Shall speak thy co-extended praise.

How shall I teach the world to love,
Unchanged myself, unloosed my tongue?
Give me the power of faith to prove,
And mercy shall be all my song.

Be all my added life employ'd
Thy image in my soul to see:
Fill with Thyself the mighty void;
Enlarge my heart to compass Thee!

O give me, Saviour, give me more!
Thy mercies to my soul reveal:
Alas! I see their endless store,
Yet O, I cannot, cannot feel!

The blessing of Thy love bestow:
 For this my cries shall never fail;
 Wrestling I will not let Thee go,
 I will not, till my suit prevail.

I'll weary Thee with my complaint,
 Here at thy feet forever lie,
 With longing sick, with groaning faint,
 O give me love, or else I die!

Without this best, divinest grace,
 'Tis death, 'tis worse than death, to live;
 'Tis hell to want Thy blissful face,
 And saints in Thee their heaven receive.

Come, then, my hope, my life, my Lord,
 And fix in me Thy lasting home!
 Be mindful of Thy gracious word,
 Thou, with thy promised Father, come.

Prepare and then possess my heart;
 O take me, seize me from above!
 Thee do I love, for God Thou art;
 Thee do I feel, for God is love!

The "just return" Charles Wesley will make to God for restoring him to health again has four parts. 1. The mourning of his sin. The fourth stanza asserts his nearness to death was due to sin, but he specifies no sin: perhaps he now understands his doubt of Christ's power and his mistrust of his will as sin—which they were; for the first work of the Holy Spirit is to "reprove the world of sin . . . because they believe not on Me."²³ To sin, he has only two references: "I only live my sin to mourn" and his describing himself as "sinful dust and ashes." The meager number of these references suggest how imperfect is his thought of sin. Repentance for sin, forgiveness of it through faith in the atoning death of Christ, the primacy of these in time, their essential preluding all possible subsequent Christian experience, growth, and victory—these are not here. His idea of a proper return is only to mourn his sin for the remainder of his days—that is: his lifelong grief is atonement.

2. "To love my God I only live," is his next return. Naming it "this best, divinest grace" tells us he estimated rightly the significance of loving God. Christ made it the "first and great commandment."²⁴ Fitting, therefore, is it, that he devotes to it three entire stanzas, which form his prayer for it. Moreover, these are the most insistent and importunate stanzas of the entire prayer: for this love, "his cries shall never fail"; for it, he will wrestle till his "suit prevail"; for it, he will "weary" God with his "complaint"; and for it, at God's feet he will "forever lie." The last figure is a position of the body; two others employ the voice; and the fourth is a vigorous activity: wrestling. Charles, quoting its use in a line of Spenser's²⁵ applied it to his sickness. Here, in a different reference, he has his own wording of it. That wording, in 1742 or '43, he will give enduring fame in his great hymn, "Wrestling Jacob," in which he will use it four times. Noteworthy is it, that in both poems he used it in relation to the inwardly attested experience of God's love for him himself: in the ten stanzas of this prayer, this love is specified six times; in the fourteen six-line stanzas of "Wrestling Jacob,"²⁶ it is mentioned twelve times, as in this example, which states the theme of the hymn:

The secret of Thy love unfold;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go
Till I Thy, Thy nature know.

Doubtless, some of the pugnacity of the warrior who would force his way into freedom colors these two poems, but it must be conceded that the warrior-suppliant is wrestling in the right way—prayer; with the right One—God; and for the right cause—a knowledge of God's love.

3. Another part of his return to God is recorded in his lines:

To thee, benign and saving Power,
I consecrate my lengthened days.

Four times, he repeats his belief his restoration was due to "power divine"—to God: and, in return, he dedicates his life to Him who restored it. Amidst similar experiences, many have thought the same thoughts, said the same words, and vowed similar vows, only later to forget, or neglect, or betray, or repudiate them. Charles Wesley proved the trueness of his by half a century of earnest Christian living.

4. Inasmuch as he knows he himself needs, most of all, the possession of God's love, he understands his Christian duty as teaching the

world to love. To do this, he realizes he is unable, unless he is changed. The required change includes a prepared heart, a possessed heart (occupied by God, he means), and, consequently, an unloosed tongue. Such a condition he sees, but "cannot feel" it. The Saviour alone, by His mercy, can "reveal" it to his soul; can "enlarge his heart to compass" Himself; and can fix in such an expanded soul his "lasting home." Therefore, he prays,

Give me the power of faith to prove,

· · · · ·
Prepare and then possess my heart;

O take me, seize me from above!

The faith, the preparation, the possession, the initiative are from God. Certainly, now the mere human warrior is waning and the trusting Christian is waxing. So is the spiritual status of Charles Wesley in February-March, 1738, through the ministry of sickness and of Peter Böhler.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

JOHN WESLEY, Charles, and Peter Böhler having left Stanton-Harcourt and returned to Oxford, John tarried two days, on February 20th returning to London. The next day, he preached. Wednesday, the 22nd, he was with the Georgia trustees again, to whom he gave a "short account" of his reasons for leaving Georgia. Later, he wrote them out and gave that written statement to them.

Sunday, the 26th, he preached three times, at six and ten o'clock in the morning and at St. John's in Wapping in the afternoon. At the last place, his text was Galatians 6:12, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." The theme of his sermon was "open defiance of that mystery of iniquity which the world calls prudence." What he understood by this is illustrated by two experiences of the following few days. Traveling by coach the next day, he tells his experience with his fellow passengers this way: "I had several opportunities of conversing seriously with my fellow travellers. But endeavouring to mend the wisdom of God by the worldly wisdom of prefacing serious with light conversation, and afterwards following that advice of the mystics, leave them to themselves, all I had said was written on the sand." Then, there is this occurrence: "Calling at an odd house in the afternoon, I found several persons there, who seemed well-wishers to religion, to whom I spake plainly; as I did in the evening both to the servants and strangers at my inn."

Like many another earnest seeker or Christian, John Wesley had a hard task to overcome his reluctance in approaching others about the things of Christ. Recall that, the past January on the voyage to England, he had found it impossible to bring himself to speak to the crew, though he made attempts over several days to do so. Six days after his first attempt, he listed his major religious lacks, the fourth of which was, "levity and luxuriancy of spirit, recurring whenever the pressure is taken off, and appearing by my speaking words not tending to

edify." It is probable that this weakness was rebuked by his talks with Peter Böhler, in which the latter most likely told John of his vow with Zinzendorf to be "instant in season and out of season," and which Böhler demonstrated in his telling him soon that he had to be purged of the philosophy he follows.

Emboldened by something, he preaches that sermon at St. John's, both to the congregation and to himself. What his hearers did is not told; but what the preacher did, he himself tells. The next, he did speak to others but did so in what he designated as "mending the wisdom of God by wordly wisdom"—that is, he began with "light conversation"; led into the serious; and, then, followed the rule of the mystics to "press them to nothing." The result was like writing on sand.

Odd people he found at the odd house the next day—well-wishers to religion is his estimate of their attitude. To them, he had no difficulty in talking and, apparently, no definite fruit, though he did talk plainly. The same routine occurred at the inn that evening.

The important result was in John himself. Again, he turns to resolutions:

1. To use absolute openness and unreserve with all I should converse with.
2. To labour after continual seriousness, not willingly indulging myself in any the least levity of behaviour, or in laughter, no not for a monment.
3. To speak no word which does not tend to the glory of God; in particular, not to talk of worldly things. Others may—nay, must. But what is that to thee? And
4. To take no pleasure which does not tend to the glory of God; thanking God every moment for all I do take, and therefore rejecting every sort and degree of it, which I feel I cannot so thank Him in and for.

Excepting the first, these resolutions are only a particularizing of the fourth one of last January. They are rules of practical conduct and, as such, are an intensification of his stress upon what he himself can do. Being so, they omit any reference to the deeper area of the spirit which underlies all true Christian living. He gave first places to faith in Christ and humility and, similar to the spirit of his brother's second poem just discussed, are his words, "Give me faith or I die: give me a lowly spirit." John had gone a bit backward here.

After the above sermon, John left London for Salisbury to see his mother, who was staying there with her son-in-law and her daughter Martha, Mrs. Hall. February 28th, he wrote, "I saw my mother once more." The next day, he prepared to journey seventy-five miles south-west, to Tiverton in Devonshire, to visit Samuel; but, on the morning of March 2nd, he received notice that "Charles was dying at Oxford": and he started at once for that town. Arriving on Saturday, March 4th, what he found appears in his *Journal* entry: "I found my brother at Oxford recovering from his pleurisy: and with him Peter Böhler." What else he found concerning Charles is detailed above. His meeting with Peter Böhler begins the next to the final stage of his quest, to which we must address ourselves now.

March 4th,¹ Saturday, John Wesley and Peter Böhler are together again at Oxford: and, since the latter will not leave till the 10th, they will be together, more or less, for six days. What transpired between them is as follows:

That afternoon, Peter Böhler spent with some students, "exhorting them very heartily that they might give all diligence to believing themselves into faith in the Saviour."² He is striking this doctrine of faith in Christ as Saviour very hard now, having found, "The people here when they hear our 'Principia'³ concerning the Saviour are astonished, or weep, or sigh, or rejoice that He should have been such a good man." That is: they did most anything but believe in Him as their Saviour.

That evening, there was a meeting at which "the older Wesley was also present." Then Böhler has this: "In the evening, I went walking with the elder Wesley and asked him about his condition." Peter Böhler is practicing the instancy Wesley has resolved to follow. "He said that sometimes he felt quite certain, but sometimes very fearful; he could say nothing further than 'if that is true which stands in the Bible, then I am saved.' On this matter I talked with him very fully and besought him heartily that he might go to the opened fountain and not spoil the matter for himself."

Later in the evening, Wesley, Böhler, and some others, knowing a certain prisoner had been sentenced to hang, had a "discussion as to how souls should be sought for the Saviour." The conclusions are not given.

Sunday, the 5th, these two were together again and, under Böhler's hammering, John made this stride forward in his quest: "Peter Böhler:

by whom (in the hand of the great God) I was, on Sunday the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief; of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved.

"Immediately it struck into my mind, 'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others who have not faith yourself?' I asked Böhler whether he thought I should leave it off or not? He answered, 'By no means.' I asked, 'But what can I preach?' He said, 'Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.'

"Accordingly, Monday 6, I began preaching this new doctrine, though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation by faith alone was a prisoner under sentence of death. His name was Clifford. Peter Böhler had many times desired me to speak to him before. But I could not prevail on myself so to do; being still (as I had been many years) a zealous asserter of the impossibility of a death-bed repentance."

Tarry over this a while.

1. Böhler has convinced John Wesley that he is an unbeliever. By unbelief, John understood "the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." In a later footnote, he added this: "With the full Christian salvation." Though he is making no distinction between belief and saving faith, his footnote intimates he sensed a difference was there some way. There is disparity: belief has more of an intellectual quality and means one assents to certain things as true; but faith is of the heart and means a personal committal of oneself to what is believed. This is trust. Only last February 1st, he made such a distinction by claiming the "having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity" allows none a "claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian." Saving faith, then, was distinct from rational conviction in its bearing fruits, which the reason cannot bear. At the same time, he joined, or perhaps equated, rational conviction and the faith of a servant but separated these from the faith of a son. He is now understanding adequate faith as issuing from a higher status, when, instead, faith is a means by which one is given any status before God above that of a sinner. In his last paragraph of his *Journal's* record for last February 1st, he is clearer about faith than here. There, he was headed straight for the matured, comprehensive understanding of Christian faith, which, on the 18th of next June, he will state in these grand words:

"Christian faith is, then, not only an assent to the whole Gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in

the merits of His life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us. It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God: and, in consequence hereof, a closing with Him, and cleaving to Him, as our 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' or, in one word, our salvation."⁴

From the path which led to this, he has turned, since his arrival in England: and it is well that there is present a man like Peter Böhler. He is now bringing John Wesley back to the right path.

Not only did Peter Böhler bring John back to the true path at this time but also he led him a bit farther upon it. Negatively, he convinced Wesley that, since faith was the only means of justification, all else was unbelief and non-faith: positively, he made faith stand out as efficacious alone. Doing so, he wrecked the area of trust which John has accepted for years, that is, his own works. Consequently, he now adds the significant word "alone"—that faith whereby alone we are saved. Whether or not he fully senses or sees it now, on this Sabbath of March 5, 1738, he has become acquainted with the only beginning by which he can "begin to be acquainted with the Saviour." And so it will prove; for, when that memorable May 24th shall come, the word "alone" will be a major star in salvation's galaxy, which rings the Living, Redeeming Christ.

2. John Wesley's first and immediate reaction to this deeper and truer knowledge of the Gospel way was to cease all preaching until he had such faith as Böhler depicted; for, he felt (not reasoned) none could preach what he did not know. Many will support this proposal as logical and sound. For Wesley, it was natural, for it was his innate love of solitude beckoning to him again. He does not reckon in the fact that heavenly treasure can be contained in earthen vessels,⁵ even in cracked and soiled ones; nor has he yet come to see that preaching also is a form of waiting upon God, on man's part as well as on God's part, forming a means of grace. Just here, John was in grave danger, but, from it, in God's good providence, he was saved by Peter Böhler's wise counsel, "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."

3. And John Wesley heeds, the very next day.⁶ It was done to a condemned criminal named Clifford, who might have been the one of whom the Wesleys, Böhler, and some others had spoken to a day or

two ago. It was one to whom Peter Böhler had asked John "many times" to go, but he had refused, because for a long time he had been zealous in asserting there could be no such act as a death-bed repentance. Perhaps, his proposal to cease preaching until he had faith was motivated by John's desire both to evade Böhler's importunities and to preserve his un-New Testament (has he forgotten the repentant thief?) assertion that here was no opportunity of salvation to the dying.

He went, however, preaching "this new doctrine" to Clifford. How he received the message, Tyerman says was this: "A sermon at Oxford castle was chiefly addressed to a man condemned to die, and who, on the same day, found the forgiveness of his sins, and shortly after went to the gallows 'enjoying perfect peace.'" How John Wesley felt over his preaching the "new doctrine" is seen in his remark, "My soul started back from the work." There is much profit in pondering his reluctance.

For nearly thirteen years now, John Wesley has been seeking a satisfying religious experience. His wide and thorough quest led him to the ordained practices of the Christian faith; to the homilies of his Church; to the Scriptures; to the books of Jeremy Taylor, Thomas à Kempis, William Law, Henry Scougal; to the Apostolic Constitutions; to incessant and sacrificial doing of good; to fasting; to an old man, a porter, a contemplative man, his mother, a group of students, a trio of young women, to the Indians of the New World, and to the Herrnhut Moravians. Though he discarded some of these, the point here is that he approached them eagerly and pursued them vigorously, finding real aid in some but full satisfaction in none. At last, for two weeks or more, he has heard this true Gospel, has had time to ponder it, has become convinced it is true, has admitted he does not possess it: but exhibits no desire to possess it, fights against it, and has to be goaded into a hesitating presentation of it. He discovers no eagerness but reluctance; no ardent pursuing but stubborn opposing. Even the demonstration of its power, which followed his laggard effort, does not appear, as yet, to have moved him. What a creature is man? Was John's pride breeding resentment, because his pet theory of no possible death-bed repentance has been annihilated? Was he so bound to pride in his own powers that fight arose instead of faith? Is he not illustrating Paul's words, "The carnal mind is enmity against God,"⁷ and "The natural man receiveth not the things of God"?⁸

After these events of March 4th-6th, Peter Böhler remained in Oxford till Friday, the 10th. His records inform us that he spent con-

siderable time with John Gambold, with whom he had real "intimate spiritual fellowship," or "Band,"⁹ his German term. There is no indication that Böhler and Wesley were together during these four days, nor Böhler and Charles either. The last, as we shall see, seems to have dismissed Böhler's teachings until April 28th. However, it is quite likely they met at times, though there is no record of them. On March 10th, Peter Böhler returned to London.

The encouragement—at the least that, if not conviction—Wesley could have gotten from Clifford's experience of believing and of experiencing justification by faith alone, diffidently offered as it was, was undergirded by a series of experiences which confirmed what Peter Böhler had shown him. March 15th, with Mr. Kinchin and a Mr. Fox, "late a prisoner in the city prison" of Oxford, he left Oxford for Manchester, to bring thence to Oxford Mr. Kinchin's brother, who was to be entered as a student. By way of Birmingham, Stafford, Newcastle under Lyme, Altringham, they traveled and, with slight variation, returned the same way, arriving at Oxford the evening of March 22nd.

All along the way, they were mindful, first, of their religious opportunities, except at Birmingham. Dining there at noon at the inn, they spoke to no one about religion. That they, surely John Wesley, felt condemned over this omission appears in his report of the afternoon's events: "We dined at Birmingham, and soon after we left it, were reproved for our negligence there (in letting those who attended us go, without either exhortation or instruction) by a severe shower of hail. At Hedgeford, about five, we endeavoured to be more faithful; and all who heard seemed serious and affected."

Twelve communities are mentioned specifically as being visited by them, and twenty-five contacts with persons or groups are recorded. In these contacts, they spoke, or read prayers, or explained, or exhorted, or counseled. Their only notable failures were at Birmingham and an hour's session John had at Altringham with a Quaker, who, he soon found, was "well skilled in, and therefore sufficiently fond of, controversy." John concluded the dispute by saying: "I advised him to dispute as little as possible; but rather follow after holiness, and walk humbly with God."

All the other twenty-three contacts were successful. These included a prisoner's wife, the mistress of a house, her servant, her "ostler," a "stranger," a "gay young woman," two men at dinner, a "gentlewoman," a traveling man and woman, a second Quaker, and unspecified others. Descriptions of the responses are: tears, melted hearts, rejoicing, praising

God, deeply affected, confession, astonishment, and returning for more.

John's narration of three instances will convey the spirit of the messengers and the temper of the people. At Stafford, the "mistress of the house joined with us in family prayer. The next morning one of the servants appeared deeply affected, as did the ostler before we went. Soon after breakfast, stepping into the stable, I spake a few words to those who were there. A stranger who heard me said, 'Sir, I wish I was to travel with you'; and when I went into the house followed me, and began abruptly, 'Sir, I believe you are a good man, and I come to tell you a little of my life.' The tears stood in his eyes all the time he spoke; and we hoped not a word which was said to him was lost.

"Coming to Holms-Chapel about three, we were surprised at being shown into a room where a cloth and plates were laid. Soon after, two men came in to dinner. Mr. Kinchin told them, 'If they pleased, that gentleman would ask a blessing for them.' They stared, and as it were consented; but sat still while I did, one of them with his hat on. We began to speak on turning to God, and went on, though they appeared utterly regardless. After a while their countenances changed, and one of them stole off his hat, and laying it down behind him, said, 'All we said was true; but he had been a grievous sinner, and not considered it as he ought; but he was resolved, with God's help, now to turn to Him in earnest.' "

Upon their returning journey, between Hedgeford and Talk-on-the-Hill, occurred this third example. "About five, Mr. Kinchin riding by a man and woman double-horsed, the man said, 'Sir, you ought to thank God it is a fair day; for if it rained, you would be sadly dirty with your little horse.' Mr. Kinchin answered, 'True: and we ought to thank God for our life and health, and food and raiment, and all things.' He then rode on, Mr. Fox following. The man said, 'Sir, my mistress would be glad to have some more talk with that gentleman.' We stayed, and when they came up, began to search one another's hearts. They came to us again in the evening, at our inn at Stone; where I explained both to them and many of their acquaintance who were come together, that great truth, 'Godliness hath the promise both of this life and of that which is to come.' "10

So "white already to harvest" were the folks of Staffordshire and Cheshire!

It is significant that the only sermon John Wesley preached on this journey, at St. Ann's in Manchester on the 19th, was from the text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."11

Surely, these concrete instances had a considerable effect upon John Wesley. Inasmuch as it is likely he did not present in every case Peter Böhler's new doctrine, he could have found confirmation of it in the responses of those to whom he did present it. Moreover, he found many, like himself, were seeking something more and different from what they had, a discovery which could have stimulated him.

Reaching Oxford again in the evening of March 21st,¹² he found Peter Böhler was there. He came from London under these conditions.

On the 21st of March, after a stay of three months¹³ at Oxford, Böhler returned to London. There he continued to teach the inquirers with whom he was acquainted. Among them was James Hutton.¹⁴ A letter having arrived from Zinzendorf for Charles Wesley, Böhler, accompanied by Wenzel Neisser, took it to Oxford.¹⁵

Wesley's report of what happened between himself, Böhler, and Charles reads: "Thur 23. I met Peter Böhler again, who now amazed me more and more by the account he gave of the fruits of living faith, the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it."

Böhler's detailed account is this:

The most remarkable feature of this second¹⁶ visit was a very full conversation which I had with the two Wesleys, in order to impress the Gospel upon their minds and entreat them to proclaim it to others, as they had opportunity at Oxford and elsewhere. They confessed their doubts respecting the doctrine of free grace through the merits of Jesus, whereby poor sinners receive forgiveness and are set free from the dominion of sin. The Saviour, however, granted me wisdom to convince them from the Scriptures, and they had no way of escape except to ask to see and converse with persons who had made the experience of which I spoke. I told them that in London I hoped to be able to show them such Christians.¹⁷

Böhler's purpose was twofold: "to impress the Gospel upon their minds and to entreat them to proclaim it to others." The latter depended upon the former; and, about what he meant by the Gospel, he soon found, the brothers had deep doubts. To dispel these, Böhler appealed to the Scriptures; and, conscious of Christ's support, he gave them what John called an "account of the fruits of living faith, the holiness and happiness" attending such faith. According to a reference soon to be noted,

Charles, instead of being convinced, was strongly opposed. John listened with mounting agreement: but with no full assent.

For this, he later assigned these reasons:

"In my return to England, January, 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief, and that the gaining a true, living faith, was the one thing needful for me. But still I fixed not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith; but only thought I had not enough of it.

"So that when Peter Böhler, whom God prepared for me as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ (which is but one) that it had those two fruits inseparably attending it, 'Dominion over sin, and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness,' I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new Gospel. If this was so, it was clear, I had not faith.

"But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore, I disputed with all my might, and laboured to prove that faith might be where these were not; especially where the sense of forgiveness was not: for all the Scriptures relating to this, I had been long since taught to construe away. . . . Besides, I well saw, no one could (in the nature of things) have such a sense of forgiveness, and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once."¹⁸

Certain amplifications upon this statement can be helpful. John attributes his quest's failure from its beginning on to February 7, 1738, to two characteristics of what faith he then had: the one was an improper direction of it; the other, an insufficient amount of it. To this faith, he does not seem to have attached any particular and practical effects, evidenced unmistakably in his own spirit and life. While he and Böhler were on that evening walk in Oxford, Wesley did say he had an idea he was saved: but he did not tie it to faith; and admitted he wavered between being "quite certain" and "very fearful." His faith is still "notional"—that is, an idea in his mind. Moreover, he seems not to have expected any concrete results. Then, he meets Böhler, who asserts faith has these fruits: forgiveness, peace, dominion over sin, holiness, and happiness. He had none of these. Again, there comes to the fore that principle he laid down at the very beginning of his quest, in con-

nection with Jeremy Taylor's book, that, if Christ deal with men, they must be conscious of it. He cannot deny this axiom. Applying it now to his credo and Böhler's teaching, he was driven to acknowledge all his "pretensions to faith dropped at once."

"But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore, I disputed with all my might, and laboured to prove that faith might be where these were not." This is the John Wesley which Peter Böhler faced that Thursday afternoon at Oxford.

John's frank statement here highly illuminates human nature in general and in particular in its relation to the things of God. Any casual reader of Wesleyana will come to see that John's personality was large on the intellectual side. His mind was well stored, ordered, trained, keen, and logical. He was always argumentative. Writing to one of his preachers, Joseph Benson, in 1770, to caution him against too great reliance upon argument, he said, "'Child,' said my father to me when I was young, 'you think to carry everything by dint of argument. But you will find by and by how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason.'" And John added, "Very little indeed!"¹⁹ In his 63rd year, his answer to Betsy Ritchie's question about the guidance of reason was: "Count Zinzendorf observes there are three different ways wherein it pleases God to lead His people: some are guided almost in every instance by apposite texts of Scripture; others see a clear and plain reason for everything they are to do; and yet others are led not so much by Scripture or reason as by particular impressions. I am rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and by Scripture."²⁰ After a little, in the present clash with Peter Böhler, he will come to these last two methods of inquiry. For the time, he fights. Pure fighting lasted only overnight: opposition, however, will continue until April 22nd.

Meantime, John will not sulk or nurse wrath, but he will resort to Scripture and reason. He begins at once: "The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony'; and being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God." He set aside the glosses of men, taking the pertinent Scripture passages as they were and comparing them and studying the more obscure ones by the light of the plain texts.

Sound policy and precedence, these are. True, the testing began in a pugnacious spirit; continued without sign of surrender; and had something of stubbornness to it. Yet, there is to all of this this value: the Gospel of Peter Böhler survived the test, thus witnessing to its inherent power.

While his checking of Böhler's claims with the New Testament was in progress, he was active and rewarded in his preaching the new doctrine, even though he himself had not its faith. The testing is proceeding both in his study and in his contacts with men. "The new creature" was his sermon theme on the 26th. The next day, in the castle at Oxford, he and Mr. Kinchin, after prayer and preaching, heard a condemned prisoner declare, "I am now ready to die, I know Christ has taken away my sins, and there is no more condemnation for me"; and saw him go to his death with a "composed cheerfulness." April 1st, while in a Society meeting, he was moved thus: "My heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more; but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions." Recall that, *en route* to Georgia, on Friday, October 17th, he wrote, "I now first preached extempore": now, two and a half years later, the recent High Church cleric is unbending more, because he is coming into an inner, spiritual freedom and largeness which demand varied and free forms of expression on "particular occasions." He is not casting long-used forms to the winds: that, he never did. He is refusing to use them only. New wine is bursting old bottles.

April 2nd was Easter Sunday. Thrice did he preach from the text, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."²¹

He does not say what effect the day had upon others, but something either in the day or the message or both brought him to this point in his quest: "I see the promise; but it is afar off."

The first clause is progress, made through his search of the Scriptures, doubtless, by which searching he has been brought to an encouraging and convincing glimpse of what Peter Böhler taught. He does not inform his mentor of this fact; for he is in Oxford and Böhler is in London and they will not meet again until twenty days later.

Fifteen of those twenty days were consumed in the retrogression, indicated in John's second Easter Sunday clause, "But it is afar off." The pugnacity and stubborn elements of his testing come atop at this point; for his locating acceptance of the promise as afar off is really a form of his fighting it off. Also, it is an arbitrary delay, since the Epistle to the Romans, in which he undoubtedly did much of his searching, says, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy hearts: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."²² His putting-off tactic will appear again in two weeks.

For the present, its effect is this: "Believing it would be better for me to wait for the accomplishment of it in silence and retirement, on Monday, 3d, I complied with Mr. Kinchin's desire, and went to him at Dummar, in Hampshire." Mr. Charles Kinchin at this time was rector²³ there. John called it "a little village,"²⁴ which it was, with around four hundred inhabitants.²⁵ Once more, John Wesley is backsliding. The truth is: Mr. Kinchin's invitation, along with a justifiable need of pondering these new insights and an understandably human hesitation upon the brink of clearly sensed and radical changes, touched into life his old, strong, and abiding love of silence and retirement. Nearly a year and a half ago, he began both his exposé and his discard of mysticism, but here he moves toward it, and for the last time as a means of consummating his quest.

At Dummer, he remained for fifteen days. Meantime, concerns of the Georgia trustees, though he was scheduled to be in Oxford on April 21st,²⁶ "earnestly pressed him to come up to London." Accordingly, he left Dummer and arrived in London on Tuesday, the 18th. The urgent business at London was this: "I once more waited on the Trustees for Georgia; but being straitened for time, was obliged to leave the papers for them, which I had designed to give into their hands. One of these was the instrument whereby they had appointed me Minister of Savannah; which, having no more place in those parts, I thought it not right to keep any longer." So ends Wesley's official connection with Georgia. On the 19th, Charles arrived from Oxford to bid farewell to Oglethorpe, whose departure made urgent John's surrender of his commission, so that a successor could be selected and properly authorized. On the 20th, Charles wrote, "I had the satisfaction of once more meeting that man of God, Peter Böhler."

The next ten days are a highly significant period in John Wesley's long quest, and the relation of its pertinent events opens with the recurring theme, "I met Peter Böhler once more." The day is Saturday, April 21, 1738. The place is London.

At the last meeting with Böhler, March 23rd, they had agreed to put the decision as to what living faith was upon what the Scriptures said. The next day, John began his examination of them, which he has pursued till now.

His report, made most likely to Böhler, included a statement of his own defeat—"I found they all made against me"; and this detailed statement: "I had no objection to what he said of the nature of faith, viz. that it is (to use the words of our church) 'A sure trust and confi-

dence which a man hath in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.' Neither could I deny either the happiness or holiness which he described, as fruits of this living faith. 'The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God'; and, 'He that believeth hath the witness in himself,' fully convinced me of the former; as 'Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin,' and 'Whosoever believeth, is born of God,' did of the latter." Peter Böhler wins again.

His is not a total victory, however. John conceded defeat only on what Böhler held was the nature and fruit of living faith. Even then, he did not ascribe his rout to Böhler's argument but to the Bible's testimony. He continues fighting upon this other line of attack: "I could not comprehend what he spoke of an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment: how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost." He turned to the Bible again: "I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles: but, to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions; scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth." Once more, Böhler wins.

Once more, Wesley acknowledges defeat: once more, allows it of the one point: and once more, attacks at another point. "I had but one retreat left," he says, "viz. 'Thus: I grant, God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe He works in the same manner now?' " What! Is one reading aright? Does the exalted seeker plunge down to the bald banality of the word of myriads of glib, weak, thoughtless tongues—"times are changed"? Has the acute, trained logician abandoned even ordinary common sense for this? Yes; there it is: "the times are changed." It recalls the remark he made after hearing another egregious misuse of logic, when he exclaimed, "O what will not those either believe or assert, who are resolved to defend a desperate cause!"²⁷

The point at which he deemed the times changed was, "What reason have I to believe, God works in the same manner now," as He did in the days of the Apostles? "Experience would never agree with the literal interpretation of those Scriptures. Nor could I, therefore, allow it to be true, till I found some living witnesses of it." Peter Böhler offered to bring such witnesses. He did so on Sunday, April 22nd. Listening, John heard them testify that God had given them in a moment

such a faith in the blood of his Son as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. "They added with one mouth, that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God, and that He would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it."

Peter Böhler's report contains much more detail. "I took with me four of the English brethren to John Wesley, that they might relate to him their guidance. . . . John Wesley and the rest who were with him were as though struck dumb²⁸ at these narratives. I asked Wesley what he now believed? He said, 'Four examples did not settle the matter and could not convince him.' " John is fighting still. Böhler continues, "I replied that I would bring him eight more here in London. After a short time, he arose and said, 'We will sing the hymn, "My soul before thee prostrate lies!" ' During the singing he frequently dried his eyes and immediately afterward he took me alone with him into his bedroom and said he was now convinced of that which I had said concerning faith and that he would ask nothing further, that he saw very well, that it was not yet anything with him,²⁹ but could he now help himself and how should he attain to such a faith? He was a man who had not sinned as grossly as other people. I replied that not to believe in the Saviour was sinning enough; he should only not go away from the door of the Saviour until He had helped him. I was strongly moved to pray with him; therefore, I called upon the blood-covered name³⁰ of the Saviour for mercy on this sinner. He said to me, if he once had *this* he would then certainly preach nothing other than faith."³¹

John Wesley then called for the singing of this hymn:

"My soul before Thee prostrate lies,
To Thee, her Source, my spirit flies;
O let Thy cheering countenance shine
On this poor mournful heart of mine.

"From feeling misery's depth I cry,
In Thy death, Saviour, let me die.
May self in Thy excessive pain
Be swallowed up, nor rise again.

"Jesu! vouchsafe my heart and will
With Thy meek lowliness to fill,
Break nature's bonds, and let me see
That whom Thou free'st indeed is free.

"My heart in Thee, and in Thy ways,
Delights, yet from Thy presence strays;
My mind must deeper sink in Thee;
My foot stand firm, from wandering free.

"I know that nought we have avails,
Here all our strength and wisdom fails:
Who bids a sinful heart be clean?
Thou only, Thou, supreme of men!

"Lord, well I know Thy tender love,
Thou never didst unfaithful prove;
I surely know Thou stand'st by me,
Pleased from myself to set me free.

"Still will I long and wait for Thee
Till in Thy light the light I see;
Till Thou in Thy good time appear,
And sav'st my soul from every snare.

"All my own schemes and self-design
I to Thy better will resign;
Impress this deeply on my breast,
That I'm in Thee already blest.

"When my desires I fix on Thee,
And plunge me in Thy mercy's sea,
Thy smiling face my heart perceives,
Sweetly refresh'd, in safety lives;

"So even in storms I Thee shall know,
My sure support, my boldness grow;
And I (what endless age shall prove)
Shall seal this truth that God is love."³²

Beaten out of his last retreat and broken in heart, John surrenders: "I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end; 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works or righteousness, on which I

had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the use of all other constant means, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith; a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for *me*; a trust in him as *my* Christ, as *my* sole justification, sanctification, and redemption."

At last, after nearly thirteen years of questing, his mind sees the right path; his will puts his feet upon it; and soon his heart will know The Way. Till then, he will walk this path, a bit erratically and without much sign of progress: but he will pursue it doggedly, the while finding encouragement.

At length, he will become a finder.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

FOLLOWING THIS conviction and resolution, there came to John Wesley again the sense of his inadequacy for presenting this Gospel until he himself had experienced it. Hence, once more, he asked Peter Böhler whether he ought not to refrain from doing so; and, once more, Böhler rescued him with his wise and sturdy counsel, "No; do not hide in the earth the talent God hath given you." Probably this occurred on Monday. Exhibiting the promptitude which characterized John Wesley all his life, he obeyed: "Accordingly, on Tuesday 25th, I spoke clearly and fully at Blendon to Mr. Delamotte's family, of the nature and fruits of faith. Mr. Broughton and my brother were there. Mr. Broughton's great objection was, he could never think I had not faith, who had done and suffered such things. My brother was very angry, and told me, 'I did not know what mischief I had done by talking thus.' And indeed it did please God then to kindle a fire, which I trust shall never be extinguished."

Having considered, in the previous chapter, the case of these objectors to what John said, view it a little now from John's side. What he saw he put in the words, "It did please God then to kindle a fire." Upon the surface, it would appear that John was bearding the lion in his den. Though one of the Delamotte sons, Charles, was of the Wesley mind and had gone with the brothers to Georgia, the parents, especially Mrs. Delamotte, were opposed strongly to their zeal and, now, especially to John's new beliefs. Recall that, upon his return from Georgia, John stopped at their home, expecting to receive a "cold reception" but, instead, was met in this disarming fashion: "I was welcomed in such a manner as constrained me to say, 'Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not!'" Between that February 3rd and this April 25th, the Delamotte attitude has changed: but towards John only. Charles also will be barred by part of the family after he accepts the new faith of Peter Böhler. For the time, however, the Charles Wesley faction judged Peter Böhler and John Wesley upon the mere basis of difference

from what had been accepted as the Christian faith. It did not occur to them to ask whether the old was partially true and the new wholly true; or whether, as the fact really was, the old was true but out of its proper order and the new was true and in its proper order. Tradition is often stronger than truth, as Jesus found.¹ Fighting is easier than thinking.

Amidst Mrs. Delamotte's opposition for herself and her fear of John's religious misleading of her daughters, Mr. Broughton's plausible objection, and his brother's wrathful fuming, John kept his balance, seeing something deeper and dawning. He saw a kindling in William Delamotte, one of the sons. Last January, he had raised the Methodist standard at Cambridge;² by May 13th, he was encouraging³ Charles Wesley in his seeking; by the following June, having written against the new but having found the Scriptures strongly for it, he admitted defeat; and, in a day or so, he was enjoying the "fruits of the Holy Spirit."⁴ The Delamotte servants, Mary and Hannah, were believers.⁵ The Delamotte daughters, Betsy and Hetty, were earnest seekers.⁶ These were the signs and experiences guiding and confirming John Wesley. These were the God-kindled fire.

Most likely, it is at this time that there occurred an interview between John and Böhler, of which Peter Böhler alone wrote a record:

"Then I had a very affectionate conversation⁷ with John Wesley. He recounted to me what sort of opposition he had met with yesterday on the part of the pietist pastors among whom he had got by chance, because on that occasion, he had declared to them that of which he is now convinced and wherein he is lacking; that he does not concern himself therewith,⁸ also asked me what he should do in this regard, whether he should tell the people where he now stands or not?

"I replied: in this matter I could give him no advice, he would have to do what the Saviour would teach him, but I wished that he would not put the grace of the Saviour so far from him, but might believe that it was near and that the heart of Jesus even now stands open, and that His grace towards him is great. He wept heartily and bitterly while I spake with him of this matter. This I can say of him: he is truly a poor sinner, who has a broken heart and who hungers after a better righteousness than he has had until now, namely the righteousness of Christ.

"In the evening he preached on 1 Cor. 1:23: 'We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block.' He had more than 4,000 listeners and is said so to have spoken about this matter, that all people

were astounded, because one never heard anything like that from him. His first words were: 'I feel myself heartily unworthy to preach about the crucified Jesus.' . . . Many were awakened thereby."

It is plain that John is so thoroughly convinced of the truth of Peter Böhler's teaching he is unconcerned over what the ministers might say but is much concerned over a public declaration of it. On this point, Böhler will not advise him—a counsel which discloses his own good sense; which reveals him as no conceited, officious meddler, and which made John face the decision of his duty. The decision was required, no doubt, by the fact that that evening John was scheduled to preach at a public assembly for the first time since his acceptance of the new doctrine a few days ago. Hitherto, he has mentioned it in one small group of friends and relatives, and the reception by most of whom was not encouraging for a public declaration of it. It is likely that he expected a proportionate degree of opposition; and, in an assembly of size, that would be tantamount to a riot. However, his decision was made before that evening and, for him, it was one of a far reach. His hearers numbered over four thousand people from London and its vicinity. There can be no question over this throng; for, several months past, George Whitefield had been eliciting the hearing of many such crowds: moreover, something of the Wesleys was known generally.

Besides the attendance, Peter Böhler recorded three other facts about the occasion. The first was John's text, which presented the crucified Christ and acceptance of Him as a scandal to Jews, as moronic to Greeks.⁹ The next in his opening sentence, which is a confession of his unworthiness to preach upon this theme. The third reports the nature and effect of how John preached. His hearers were astonished at the nature of his sermon, because of its content and of the different view given by it of the preacher. Its result was the awakening of many. He now stands committed: last February 7th, he was committed to Peter Böhler; by April 22nd, he was committed to Böhler's doctrine of faith; by April 25th, he is committed before his brother and his Delamotte friends; and now, soon thereafter, he is committed before the people of London.

The preacher John Wesley is bound up with John Wesley the seeker. Of the former, he gave his large audience an insight at the start of his sermon, but he gave Peter Böhler a far more intimate insight into his soul. Turning from advising him upon his public duty, Böhler addressed the seeking sinner, urging him to cease putting the grace of the Saviour "so far from him." This he has been doing for the past three weeks

when, on April 2nd, Easter Sunday, though he preached at Oxford on a text in which were the words, "The hour cometh, and now is," he yet concluded that day with the remark, "I see the promise: but it is afar off." Now completely convinced in mind and committed privately and publicly, he himself is not committed personally and wholly and is putting that committal off arbitrarily. As Böhler saw him, he was "a poor sinner, who has a broken heart and who hungers after a better righteousness," and who, though the open heart and free grace of Christ were held before him again, "wept heartily and bitterly" but would not surrender. What a creature is man!

The end of April, John Wesley left London for Oxford. He noted this detail of the journey: "P. Böhler walked with me a few miles, and exhorted me not to stop short of the grace of God."

Böhler's detail of this walk is: "The older Wesley today returned to Oxford. I accompanied him part of the way. He once more told me his heart and mind and I begged him to believe on the Lord Jesus, thus he and many others with him would be saved. He left behind a letter to the local pastor, in which he explained his mind, what he now knows of the Saviour.¹⁰ He related to me that he now finds the grace of the Saviour everywhere in the Bible and sees how great He is and what He does for poor sinners. I have very good hope he will become the complete property of the Saviour."¹¹

Here, John declares himself with reference to the grace of Christ. After discarding justification by his own works, John has been magnifying faith in its relation to pardon. This is the human part of the experience. Now, he has seen also the divine side, which is the attitude of grace. Grace is the veiling, temporarily, of the justice of a Holy God by His mercy and love. Consonant with His holiness and justice, it is the only attitude He can take towards sinners, because, having sinned, they have no right to anything God can be to them or do for them. Being sinners, men have no right to fellowship with God; nor any capacity to suffer His justice. "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"¹² Being guilty, they have no right to His mercy. Being rebellious and disobedient, they have no right to His love. Being without merit, they have no right to justification. Hence, there can be no dealings between sinful man and the Holy God, except through the graciousness of God. Only under grace can God be "just *and* having salvation."¹³ Man, as sinner, has neither rights to, nor merits for, God's pardon. It is of God's grace alone, through Christ only, by faith solely. To "as many as received" Christ, God gives them the

"right" to become sons of God.¹⁴ Grace precedes awakening, seeking, repenting, believing, pardoning, Christian living, Christian dying, and Christian triumphing. Having become a son, he, who follows through this Christian course, has the right of inheritance and "may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."¹⁵

How much of the full content of the grace of God John Wesley had explored is not ascertainable: what is clear is his awareness of its prevalence in the Scriptures in relation to the salvation of man. With John Wesley acknowledging the fact, the greatness and the bearing of grace upon sinful men, and with Peter Böhler having a strong hope his seeking friend will become the "complete property of the Saviour," the two part on the London-Oxford Road.

Before reaching Oxford, at a place named Gerrard's Cross, John declared "the faith as it is in Jesus"; and did so the next day to a "young man" he met on the road. The following morning, he did the same to "friends at Oxford." The results were: "A strange doctrine, which some, who did not care to contradict, yet knew not what to make of; but one or two, who were thoroughly bruised by sin, willingly heard, and received it gladly."

Encouraged by these last, the next day he was "much confirmed" in "the truth that is after godliness" by hearing the experiences of a Mr. Hutchins of Pembroke College and of a Mrs. Fox, whom he designated as "two living witnesses, that God can (at least, if He does not always) give that faith whereof cometh salvation in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven."

Only a day or so is he at Oxford; for, after the controversy at the Delamotte home on April 25th, his brother returned to London, where, at James Hutton's on the morning of the 28th, he was attacked again by pleurisy. Being notified, John came thither, arriving on May 1st in the evening and reporting, "I found him at James Hutton's, better as to his health than I expected; but strongly averse from what he called the New Faith." The latter subject arose, no doubt, by John's relating what he recently had met along the road, especially by what he saw at Oxford and heard in the testimonies there concerning instantaneous reception of saving faith. This was a point of vigorous opposition by Charles Wesley and, sick though he was, he soon showed himself "strongly averse" yet to the new faith.¹⁶

Not only did John come to James Hutton's to visit his brother, but probably others as well; for there transpired this same evening an important event: "This evening," John wrote, "our little Society¹⁷ began,

which afterwards met in Fetter-lane." This is the third¹⁸ significant Society in the story of the Methodists: the first was the Holy Club at Oxford; the second, the folks at Savannah, Georgia, who met John Wesley twice a week in his rectory, whom he called the "rudiments of a Methodist society"; and this one, the third. It is not a Methodist-Moravian group;¹⁹ was organized in James Hutton's home;²⁰ and was composed of ten members.²¹ The names of these are not given, but the group included certainly John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Whitefield; and probably, William Ingham, Charles Kinchin, Mr. Hutchins, and Westley Hall.²² It is quite certain that Peter Böhler was at the organizing of the Society or came soon after. Absent or present in the body, his hand was in the formation and, what is much more important, in the discipline of it; for John begins his presentation of that discipline this way: "Our fundamental rules were as follows: In obedience to the command of God, by St. James,²³ and by the advice of Peter Böhler, it is agreed by us . . ."

Then are listed their eleven rules, of which a résumé is given. The members were divided into "bands," or "little companies" of not fewer than five or more than ten persons. Each band met weekly, apparently at the time and place the members decided. Exception was made of Wednesday evenings, when "all the bands" met at the same place for a "conference," which was to begin and close with song and prayer. New members were proposed by present ones and were questioned about the reasons for desiring membership, their willingness to be "entirely open, using no kind of reserve" in their associations with other members, and their acceptance of the "orders" of the Society. It is not said specifically the new member-applicants were examined before the others; but, from the tenor of the procedures, it is likely they were, and every member was to state "clearly and freely" any objection he had to the applicant. If admitted, he was not placed in one of the existing bands; but in a "distinct band," under a leader, and for a two-month trial period. After this, if approved, he became a full member. The bands met to confess faults and to pray for one another. In so doing, the Pauline rule in the church at Corinth²⁴ was to be observed: each member, "in order," was to speak as "freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting." Every fourth Saturday was to be kept as a day of "general intercession."²⁵ Either on the evening of the seventh Sabbath after organization or on the seventh Sabbath after the fourth Saturday, there was a "general love-feast" from seven

to ten o'clock. Dismissal from a band or from the Society followed any rule's infraction unmodified after a third warning.

A sample of how one of these bands was conducted is given us by Peter Böhler's pen, writing doubtless of the same evening: "At nine o'clock in the evening I met the older Wesley at Hutton's. He feels himself justified and is a seeking poor sinner. His heart is quite broken. May the Saviour receive him on his arms and lap."²⁶

Peter Böhler's stay in England soon ends. Wednesday, May 3rd, he has his "long and particular conversation"²⁷ with Charles Wesley, who, ceasing his aversion, came to see the true nature of the faith which Böhler knew.

"Thur. 4. Peter Böhler left London, in order to embark for Carolina. O what a work hath God begun, since his coming into England! Such an one as shall never come to an end, till heaven and earth pass away." So recorded and prophesied John Wesley.

The prophecy is not exaggerated. Yet with what small external means did Böhler labor. He came to England a stranger, not knowing where to find a dwelling. Till a few days ago, he had had no adequate understanding of English. Very few²⁸ people did he contact. Even those who heard his Gospel were apathetic or opposed, the two brothers fighting him at every step, and Charles doing so till the day before he left England. His highly effective work was due to his Gospel and to his personal experience of it. England's Methodist revival and Methodism's origin and character owe very much, indeed, to Peter Böhler.

The next two days, John spent with the Delamottes at Blendon, of whom he said, "They now believed our report." June 9th, Charles saw daughter Betsy²⁹ believing; Hannah,³⁰ one of the servants, on the 13th; the gardener³¹ on the 21st; and William, convinced in spite of his writing a refutation of the new faith, on the 27th.³² Mrs. Delamotte was still opposed.³³

Preaching twice on Sunday, he was "enabled to speak strong words," and was not much surprised when informed he "was not to preach any more in either of those churches." Tuesday, May 9th, he met the same end at Great St. Helen's Church. The next day, Mr. Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington, became "convinced of the truth as it is in Jesus."

The ensuing two days, he slumped. "I was sorrowful and very heavy; being neither able to read, nor meditate, nor sing, nor pray, nor do anything." It was during this low time, he visited Charles on the 13th, who "forced him to sing," after which he felt better.

"A little refreshed," he was by a letter from Peter Böhler at Southampton, *en route* to Georgia, whose Latin said:

"I love you greatly, and think much of you in my journey, wishing and praying that the tender mercies of Jesus Christ the Crucified, whose bowels were moved towards you more than six thousand years ago, may be manifested to your soul; that you may taste, and then see, how exceedingly the Son of God has loved you, and loves you still; and that so you may continually trust in Him, and feel His life in yourself. Beware of the sin of unbelief; and if you have not conquered it yet, see that you conquer it this very day, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Delay not, I beseech you, to believe in your Jesus Christ; but so put Him in mind of His promises to poor sinners, that he may not be able to refrain from doing for you, what he hath done for so many others. O how great, how inexpressible, how unexhausted is His love! Surely He is now ready to help; and nothing can offend Him but our unbelief. . . .

"The Lord bless you! Abide in faith, love, teaching, the communion of saints; and, briefly, in all which we have in the New Testament."

Notice Peter Böhler's insistence that Wesley's major hindrance to what he seeks is his own unbelief.³⁴ Early in his acquaintance with him, Böhler pointed out to him the sin of unbelief, and he still regards it as John's stumbling block. He puts him in as close contact with the Lord as language can by his use of "your Christ." His prayer directions will be illustrated, as noted in the last chapter, by Charles' prayer; but, as we shall see soon, not by John's.

May 14th, Sunday, he preached twice on "full salvation by faith in the blood of Christ." In one of these places he is forbidden to preach any more. Several similar experiences led him to observe, "So true do I find words of a friend, wrote to my brother about this time." The friend was John Gambold, whose letter contained these excerpts:

"I have seen, upon this occasion, more than ever I could have imagined, how intolerable the doctrine of faith is to the mind of man; and how peculiarly intolerable to religious men. One may say the most unchristian things, even down to Deism; the most enthusiastic things, so they³⁵ proceed upon mental raptures, lights and unions;

the most severe things, even the whole rigour of ascetic mortification; and all this will be forgiven. But if you speak of faith in such a manner as makes Christ a Saviour to the utmost, a most universal help and refuge; in such a manner as takes away glorying, but adds happiness to wretched man; as discovers a greater pollution in the best of us, than we could before acknowledge, but brings a greater deliverance from it than we could before expect; if any one offers to talk at this rate, he shall be heard with the same abhorrence as if he was going to rob mankind of their salvation, their Mediator, or their hopes of forgiveness.

"But this is not to be wondered at. For all religious people have such a quantity of righteousness, acquired by much painful exercise, and formed at last into current habits; which is their wealth, both for this world and the next. . . . But the doctrine of faith is a downright robber. It takes away all this wealth, and only tells us it is deposited for us with somebody else, upon whose bounty we must live like mere beggars. . . . For reason had rather resign its pretensions to judge what is bread or flesh, than have this honour wrested from it to be the architect of virtue and righteousness."

The night of Saturday, May 20th, he and friends spent in prayer for Charles. Sunday, after hearing a "truly Christian sermon" on the text, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost"; and after assisting in holy communion, John wrote, "I received the surprising news, that my brother had found rest in his soul." His admission of surprise evidences the unbelief which Peter Böhler has been attributing to him; and also affords one a measure of the degree of it, unless his knowledge of his brother's opposition made him set that experience quite behind his own. Two sermons this day brought the same refrain, "At these churches, likewise, I am to preach no more."

Then come three more juniper-tree days: "Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, I had continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart." Oft, in the natural world, there is an ominous silence before a storm, even ere the severest of storms. Here, in the spiritual world of Wesley's quest, this is so: those three days are the silence. Then broke the storm, "something of which," he wrote, "I described, in the broken manner I was able, in the following letter to a friend:³⁶

"O why is it, that so great, so wise, so holy a God will use such an instrument as me! Lord, 'let the dead bury their dead'! But wilt

Thou send the dead to raise the dead? Yea, Thou sendest whom Thou wilt send, and showest mercy by whom Thou wilt show mercy! Amen! Be it then according to Thy will! If Thou speak the word, Judas shall cast out devils.

"I feel what you say (though not enough), for I am under the same condemnation. I see that the whole law of God is holy, just, and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that 'I am sold under sin'. I know that I, too, deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations; and having no good thing in me, to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire; I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

"Yet I hear a voice (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.' He that believeth is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"O let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith! By its fruits we shall know, Do we already feel 'peace with God,' and 'joy in the Holy Ghost'? Does 'His Spirit bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God'? Alas, with mine He does not. Nor, I fear, with yours. O thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in anything but Thee! Draw us after Thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from Thy love, in time or in eternity!"³⁷

Gaze awhile upon what this soul-storm reveals.

1. The opening paragraph concerns his lifework and its initial sentence informs us he is questioning God's judgment in His call of him. About this questioning, there is an intensity of passionate feeling, more characteristic of his younger brother than of himself: yet the appearance of such explosive feeling in more self-contained John affords more accurate estimate of its power. The breeze which bends a willow will shake but slightly a balsam. This emotional eruption witnesses also that, for some considerable time, he has resisted God's call, thereby allowing the accumulation of feeling that now bursts with passionate violence.

It is certain he now recognizes he is facing the burning bush,³⁸ whereat the decisive no or yes must be said. His pattern of procedure is Moses-like. He argues with God. Like Moses, he is self-depreciative, characterizing himself as "such an instrument as me" and as one dead spiritually sent to raise the spiritually dead. To this last, there is logic: sound premise is it that John is dead spiritually; and equally sound conclusion is it that the dead cannot raise the dead. This conclusion reflects his twice asking Peter Böhler about his ceasing to teach others until he himself is converted: here, he casts it between himself and Christ. However, scarcely is this argument written, ere he recognizes its omission: that whom God calls He equips and supports. "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say,"³⁹ said God to Moses. Similarly, He has spoken to Wesley; and John, Moses-like in both word and act, surrenders unconditionally: "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."⁴⁰ John added his own personal word: "Amen! Be it then according to Thy will." Rebellion ends. He is like the weaned child of Psalm 131.

2. The second paragraph is remarkable in its disposition of his trust in his own good works. After thirteen years of such trust for justification, with its beginning of personal fellowship with Christ, he confesses, in the first part of this paragraph, their complete and utter failure to bring what he sought. In the face of the increasing testimony of others and of the Scriptures to the inadequacy of one's works to secure pardon, as well as in the face of the force of a deepening consciousness of this truth, he clung through the years to his works until now he is compelled to judge them, as do the Scriptures, as "dead works."⁴¹ He, who has been questioning God's wisdom in sending the dead to raise the dead, sees now that he himself has been expecting dead works to raise dead John Wesley to life with God. Seeing this at last, he, with Paul's revulsion, calls his works what they are: "the body of this death."⁴² Upon this language, he later will comment, "That is, this body of death; this mass of sin, leading to death eternal, and cleaving as close to me as my body to my soul." We may observe, the deliverance is not wrought yet.⁴³

He goes further. Instead of his works atoning for his sin, they themselves required atoning. His religious and spiritual bankruptcy, therefore, appears in his words, "my mouth is stopped," "I have nothing to plead," and "I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed." That his

soul has been sad and burdened recently is no wonder, inasmuch as in it these things have been gestating. Fruitless as his past efforts have been, his frank admission of that fact, and accurate understanding of the reason for it, have brought him the nearest to Christ he has been at any time in his long quest.

3. This is true because, forced by the realities of frequent failure to turn from himself, outwardly as to his works, and inwardly as to his satisfactions, he seeks them elsewhere—that is, apart from himself and apart from other men.

Writing on Romans 7:24 in his *Notes on the New Testament*, he said, "The struggle is now come to the height; and the man, finding there is no help in himself, begins almost unawares to pray, who shall deliver me? He then seeks and looks for deliverance, till God in Christ appears to answer his question. The word which we translate 'deliver' implies force. And indeed without this there can be no deliverance."

Looking away now from men and from himself, divesting himself and his works of all merit and righteousness, the Divine has an opportunity which God takes, enabling John, amidst the spiritual turmoil necessarily incident upon his realigning of his means of quest, to say, "Yet I hear a voice." Though he said it with a bit of questioning, he still did say it. What said the Voice? As though it took the fainter overtone of Peter Böhler's persistent exhortation and made it a tone, full, clear, and strong, the Voice had but one message: "Believe." It is the mighty theme⁴⁴ of John's Gospel. The first step for all who would find Christ is, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent."⁴⁵ He writes out, then, three Scripture statements of the fact and of the fruits of believing, which, it is likely, are the ones he found inescapable in his pondering Peter Böhler's pressing faith upon him. Not yet is he saying, "I believe"; but he is admitting to himself and to his friend that he knows fully it is the only open and upward road to Christ.

Knowing Peter Böhler's and the Scripture's proof of one's believing is its fruits, he acknowledges he does not have faith and adds he will not be deceived into imagining he does possess it. And remembering his resolution of April 22nd to seek it "by adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith," he turns now to prayer, the second prayer in this storm letter.

How different from his opening prayer is this which closes his letter! Their addresses are different: the one has, "So wise, so holy a God;

the other, "O thou Saviour of men." The first is indirect and impersonal; the other direct and personal and redemptive. The first is the prayer of a semi-averted face; the other is of a face squarely turned towards and fully lifted up. Their content varies widely: the first pits man's judgment against God's; the second pleads to be saved from "trusting in anything" but God. The one reveals an unwillingness to follow; the other, an unwillingness to follow any one other than God. Full of self is the one; the other petitions, "Let us be emptied of ourselves." The man of the opening prayer is filled with condemnation, fallen from God's glory, sold to sin, deserving wrath, full of abominations, possessed of no good thing, even his acts of devotion needing an atonement. The man of the closing prayer asks simply for three experiences: the joy and peace of faith, and unbroken possession of the love of God in time and in eternity.

With one exception,⁴⁶ this is his last severe rebellion against God. It was not long, but great in violence. Why should another such storm develop between him and his Lord? He is surrendered completely to Christ—in Peter Böhler's phrase, is the "complete property of the Saviour." Him he will obey for the remainder of his years with a remarkable evenness.

Having surrendered, the storm clouds begin to break; and, like the first sunbeam shining through, is the two-sentence opening of his account of his day of release: "What occurred on Wednesday the 24th, I think best to relate at large, after premising what may make it better understood. Let him that cannot receive it, ask of the Father of Lights, that He would give more light to him and me." Then he traces the course of his quest, which has been followed in this work. Its momentous and successful end, he records as follows:

"I continued thus to seek it (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and usually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on those words: 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature'⁴⁷ (2 Pet. i. 4.). Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words: 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. If thou, Lord, will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with Thee; therefore, Thou shalt be feared. O

Israel, trust in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

"I began to pray with all my might for those who had in some more especial manner despitely used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but, that as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of His own will.

"After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He sent me help from His holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace; but then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered: now, I was always conqueror."

Upon several parts of this record, dwell awhile. 1. His opening sentence adds to the "continual sorrow and heaviness" of these three days these specific feelings: strange indifference, dullness and coldness, along with which were "usually frequent lapses into sin." After his long, wide, persistent, and ardent quest, indifference, dullness, coldness, and continuation of former sins might seem strange, but are so only to one who has centered his seeking upon his own zealous efforts and who, as is John's case, has given them up for the ways of another. The very nature of this situation requires awaiting the moving of that other and, for most humans, waiting is highly onerous. Moreover, to this interim, there is this positive value: it affords him abundant opportunity to see that he, detached from such hope and expectancy as his own efforts generated, could beget only what he is experiencing. His recent letter to that unnamed friend exhorted both him and himself, "Let us be

emptied of ourselves." By this, judged by his own listing in the letter's second paragraph, John meant his own works, righteousness, and prayers: and he sees what is left. "Without me ye can do nothing," Christ said to the disciples; and who can question His judgment if He chose this way of saying to Wesley: without Him, he could have only indifference, dullness, coldness, and lapses into sin; but with Him he could have zeal, keenness, warmth and victory over sin?

2. As in his brother's day of belief, so also in his does the Scripture have large place and decisive power. Early this Wednesday morning, as part of his daily devotion, he read an encouraging verse, with its promise of far more than justification—that is, partaking of the very nature of the Divine. The Greek for "partakers" is *koinonoi*,⁴⁸ meaning to have something common with the Divine nature or to be in common with it. Therefore, it reaches beyond justification to regeneration. This is the opposite to the nature he now has, in which every thought of his mind and each temper of his spirit do not "bear God's image." Yet, here is the promise of it.

Later, perhaps as he went out to morning communion, he again opened his Testament and read, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."⁴⁹ It is Jesus' commendation of that discreet, wise, intelligent⁵⁰ scribe who agreed that His recital of the Shema⁵¹ was the "first commandment of all." Years later, John commented on this statement, "Reader, art not thou? Then go on: be a real Christian; else it had been better for thee to have been afar off."⁵² The text is pertinent to Wesley on this May 24th, for the final petition of his second prayer was that naught in time or in eternity would separate his friend and himself from the love of God. His advice to go on, he will pre-exemplify now: in the future, he will maintain all his active life that Christian perfection consisted of the actual experience and practice of what Christ said were the two great commands.

That afternoon, some unnamed person had concern and initiative enough to ask him to attend St. Paul's with him. There, he was moved most by the anthem, whose music carried the second greatest of the penitential Psalms, the 130th, called the *De Profundis*, or "Out of the Depths." It speaks of experience of the depths of sin, of the unbearable judgment of a just God upon a man's sin, of God's mercy as the only refuge of any sinner, and of the amplitude of God's justifying forgiveness.

Exceedingly appropriate to John Wesley's present religious status are these three Scriptures. He, in that letter, spoke of possessing nothing

of the Divine image, not even the first testimony of the Holy Spirit that he is pardoned: but here he meets a promise of more than that resemblance. He spoke, too, of God's love for sinners and of aspiration unto unbroken love of God: and here he is given a text from Christ himself, which declares that the acknowledgment of that love as perfection is nearness⁵³ to the Kingdom of God. Aspiration after it, then, must mean an immediate proximity. The Greek of "not far" can mean nearness in space or in time. Inasmuch as the matter in hand does not require space, it must involve time, which in this instance is but a few hours away for John Wesley.

The Psalm is analogous, perfectly, with John's position. He has confessed and catalogued his deeps: condemnation, fallen from glory, sold under sin, full of abominations, no good in him; deserving only wrath, meet to be consumed; his mouth stopped, nothing to plead, everything about him needing atonement. He, too, cried unto God. He appealed, also, to God's mercy; asked for pardon of his sins; and exceeded the Psalmist by seeking the assurance of the witness of God's spirit unto the actuality of his pardon.

These texts, then, move from the highest goal to the first step sinful man must make ere he can experience that partaking of the Divine nature.

3. That evening, he attended a Society meeting in Aldersgate Street. This is not the group he and Peter Böhler organized at James Hutton's; for that met at Hutton's till sometime before January 1, 1739,⁵⁴ when it met at Fetter-lane, not Aldersgate Street. It is identified as "one of the few remaining religious 'societies' connected with the Church of England which met for prayer and Bible study."⁵⁵ His brother's reluctance of three days ago is paralleled by John's admitting he "went very unwillingly" to this meeting. Thus, down to the final move, it is not his will⁵⁶ but the drawing of the Father⁵⁷ which is effective.

Part of the Bible study this particular evening was a reading from Luther's preface to his *Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*. Like Charles and Luther's Galatians, John is surprised at hearing what Luther wrote. Though later sixteen of his standard sermons will be upon texts from it, his *Journal* and *Letters* scarcely notice it or much else about Luther. A probable reason for this is that, until this May, 1738, few others besides the Wesleys were ready for the Luther ictus upon faith or for his exposition of it. Now that they are ready, here Luther is.

John Wesley, undoubtedly, heard these and others words of Luther's upon faith.

"Righteousness, then, is such a faith and is called 'God's righteousness' or 'the righteousness that avails before God,' because God gives it and counts it as righteousness for the sake of Christ, our Mediator, and makes a man give to every man what he owes him. For through faith a man becomes sinless and comes to take pleasure in God's commandments; thus he gives to God the honor that is His and pays Him what he owes Him; but he also serves man willingly, by whatever means he can, and thus pays his debt to everyone. Such righteousness nature and free will and all our powers cannot bring into existence. No one can give himself faith, and no more can he take away his own unbelief; how, then, will he take away a single sin, even the very smallest? Therefore, all that is done apart from faith, or in unbelief, is false; it is hypocrisy and sin, no matter how good a show it makes (Romans xiv).

"Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John i); it kills the old Adam and makes altogether different men, in heart, and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do; but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them. He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

"Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence of God's grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all His creatures; and this is the work of the Holy Ghost in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise of God, who has shown him this grace; and thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. Pray God to work faith in you; else you will remain forever without faith, whatever you think or do."⁸⁸

Such were the words which probably fell upon the sorrowful, heavy, indifferent, dull, and cold heart of questing John Wesley. That which especially met him, as he then was, was Luther's "describing the change God works in the heart through faith in Christ"—change towards God, change towards men, change in himself.

Even as the reader proceeded, God was working changes in John Wesley. He specifies these: 1. "I found my heart strangely warmed." Inasmuch as he says nothing about his former indifference and dullness, it is likely that these had disappeared unnoticed during the reading. Because his coldness had been especially poignant, he noted its passing as the first strong evidence of his conversion. He had an inner glowing. This glow, however, had a strange fact about it—that is, strange as far as concerns any such similar experiences he has had hitherto. He records no detail which characterizes the difference, but it is probable that this warmth did not seem to rise out of his inner spirits; instead, it exhibited the distinct feeling of entrance into him from outside himself and independently of his willing it.

2. "I felt I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation." It has been seen that for long years he had assumed he had faith and used works to prove that faith. This pattern does apply after justification, as Luther shows abundantly. Then he came to have a "notional" faith—an "idea in the head," as he named it, which could be understood as an assent to certain things as true. After a while, he moves on to faith as trust; then, to trust in Christ; and, finally, to trust in Christ alone, as here. He now feels in the depths of his soul that, for his pardon, he is trusting in nothing nor in anyone, except Christ only. His persistent unbelief has vanished.

3. "An assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death." He is at the opposite point at which he was in Georgia, when all he could say to probing Spangenberg was, he knew Christ was the "Saviour of the world," and "I hope he died to save me." He does not particularize this assurance, whether it was peace, joy, freedom from condemnation, visit of the Holy Spirit, or the testimony of his own spirit. He is certain that it is his being really pardoned and saved from the law of sin and death. His emphasis seems to be upon the personal nature of it, since he emphasized the pronouns.

4. In accordance with Luther's pattern and in step with his brother's experience, he turned to intercession for others, praying with all his power for those who misused him and persecuted him.

5. Rising to his feet, he at once bore his witness to those there of what he now "first felt" in his heart.

6. Finally, he did not find himself freed from temptation or from the necessity of fighting against his former sins. He did find that now his fighting was "always" victorious.

One wishes there was some report of the reception by those present of John's testimony. However, we do have this much. After the service, John and a "troop of friends" came across Aldersgate Street to Little Britain to Charles' room, upon entering which, John cried, "I believe!" Neither brother now had to force the other to sing, both had abundant reason for song. There, in his room, Charles gets out the words of a hymn he wrote a day or so ago, and the brothers and their friends, at ten o'clock that night, sang, perhaps for the first time, this hymn:

Where shall my wond'ring soul begin?

How shall I all to heaven aspire?

A slave redeem'd from death and sin—

A brand pluck'd from eternal fire—

How shall I equal triumphs raise,

Or sing my great Deliv'rer's praise?

O how shall I the goodness tell,

Father, which Thou to me hast show'd?

That I, a child of wrath and hell,

I should be call'd a child of God,

Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,

Blest with this ante-past of heaven.

And shall I slight my Father's love,

Or basely fear His gifts to own?

Unmindful of His favours prove?

Shall I, the hallow'd cross to shun,

Refuse His righteousness to' impart,

By hiding it within my heart?

No: though the ancient dragon rage,

And call forth all his hosts to war;

Though earth's self-righteous sons engage,

Them and their god alike I dare;

Jesus, the sinner's Friend, proclaim;

Jesus, to sinners still the same.

Having sung this hymn "with great joy," they prayed, parted, and went out into the night.

And they went out into the city, into the nation, into neighbor nations, into old and new and far nations, and into the world.

And they went out justified and singing. Their hymn recorded and broadcast their glad wonder at the nature of, and their praise for, the innerly validated personal experience of justification by faith: and, of its four stanzas, three declare their mission as telling the Father's goodness, witnessing to knowing sins forgiven, owning God's gifts, imparting His righteousness, and proclaiming Jesus as the sinner's Friend.

"And they went forth, preaching everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." Whoever would estimate accurately what transformation occurred on those memorable days, May 21st and May 24th of 1738, must begin with the fifty years of unsurpassed service of each for that Saviour and Lord, who revealed His Gospel and Himself to Charles and John Wesley.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. A Thomas Manton, who recently baptized one of the Annesley children, asked how many Annesley children there were replied, "I believe it is two dozen, or a quarter of a hundred." *History of Methodism*, Bishop John Fletcher Hurst, New York, Eaton and Mains, 1902, vol. I, p. 74. Hereafter referred to as "Hurst."
2. Some say 1689. "November 12, 1688," is John Simon's date. *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, Epworth Press, London, England, 1921, p. 56. Hereafter referred to as "Simon I."
3. *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, McClintock & Strong, Harpers, 1881, vol. 10, p. 908. Hereafter referred to as "McClintock & Strong."
4. The tenth child was named John. Perhaps the added name was given to distinguish the two in the records. Hurst I, p. 87 and Luke Tyerman's *Life and Times of John Wesley*, Harpers, 1872, vol. I, p. 15. Hereafter referred to as "Tyerman." See also, *Life of Wesley*, by John Telford, Hodder and Stoughton, London, England, 1886, p. 11. Hereafter referred to as "Telford."

CHAPTER TWO

1. Simon, pp. 29ff.
2. Hurst says he was "seven years old when James I came to the throne." Since that occurred in 1603, Bartholomew Westley was born in 1596. Simon says, "About 1600," p. 29.
3. Simon, *ibid.*
4. Hurst I, p. 45.
5. John's father, Samuel, Sr., first omitted the "t" from the name. Hurst I, p. 73.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
7. Simon I, p. 31. He kept a *Diary* of his religious life, an example his grandson would follow. Simon I, p. 30. See especially, *Memoirs*

of the Wesley Family, by Adam Clarke, 2nd Edition, New York, Lane & Scott, 1851, pp. 36-7. Hereafter noted as "Clarke."

8. The full account of this interview, occurring between 1660-71 (Clarke, p. 48), John Wesley put in his *Journal* under the date of May 25, 1765. It reveals much of the spirit and position of the grandson. Wesley's *Journal*, Bicentenary Edition of 1938, by Nehemiah Curnock, vol. 5, pp. 119-25. References hereafter to John's *Journal* will be to this edition by the name "Curnock."
9. McClintock & Strong, vol. 10, p. 912.
10. Simon writes: "Many years afterwards it was discovered that someone had been interred in the garden attached to the house in which John Westley lived at Preston. It was concluded that he had found a resting place close to his old home." Simon 1, p. 38.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
12. Hurst 1, p. 73.
13. Simon 1, p. 46
14. Hurst 1, p. 71.
15. So Tyerman quotes John Wesley, Simon 1, p. 48.
16. McClintock & Strong, vol. 10, p. 917.
17. Hurst 1, p. 73, says it was "twelve days" after William and Mary became King and Queen. Since that occurred on Jan. 22, the date would be February 3. *Britannica*, 14th Edition, vol. 23, p. 611. Hereafter referred to as "Brit."
18. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch quotes this from a letter of Susannah Wesley's, "It is an unhappiness almost peculiar to our family that your father and I seldom think alike." See his *Hetty Wesley*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1931, p. 158.
19. Hurst 1, p. 77. The orthodox-man quote continues, "By him drawn off from the Socinian heresy . . .," Clarke, p. 385.
20. As far as John Wesley's extant letters tell, he wrote quite differently to his parents. Those to his father have a restraint of temper and a confining of content to reports about books and nonpersonal matters. He did ask his father's counsel about the Holy Club, but it appears as an isolated item. His writing to his mother is comparatively voluminous and is composed of mind-and-soul questions upon matters about which he asks, begs her counsel.
21. Hurst 1, p. 61.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

25. Curnock, vol. 2, pp. 267-8.
26. Hurst I, p. 66. Quoted Psalm 17:15.
27. A contemporary of the same name as John Westley's father-in-law. Hurst I, p. 64. He was prominent in Puritan politics and religion.
28. *Knight of the Burning Heart*, by Leslie F. Church, Abingdon-Cokesbury, p. 10. Judith's portrait was painted by Sir Peter Lely, *ibid.* See also Clarke, p. 419.
29. *Life of John Wesley*, Arnold Lunn, The Dial Press, N. Y., 1929, p. 11. Hereafter referred to as "Lunn."
30. Clarke, p. 420.
31. *Lives of John and Charles Wesley*, John Whitehead, M.D. Edition of "The True Wesleyan" Office, Pub. by Orange Scott, Boston, 1844. Whitehead's is the earliest biography of John Wesley, who specified him as the one to write it. Hereafter referred to as "Whitehead." P. 37. This manuscript was lost in the rectory fire.
32. Hurst I, p. 78.
33. Her book, *Son to Susanna*, Cokesbury, 1938, p. 24.
34. His *Life of John Wesley*, p. 7.
35. Hurst I, p. 77.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
37. Marked "Evening." Clarke quotes it, p. 385. So Hurst I, pp. 469-70.
38. Clarke, p. 385.
39. Hurst I, p. 105. He says it was one of the evening meditations. The full text is in Whitehead, p. 234. The date of it is May 17, two years after the fire and near John's birthday.
40. His *Journal* has the entire statement under the date of August 1, 1742, the day of her burial. Curnock, pp. 34-39. Four paragraphs of it John quoted in his sermon on "Obedience to Parents" (Sermon CI).
41. Other things, too, took him away: the refusal of Susannah to respond with an Amen to his prayer for the King, Hurst I, p. 96; and a time in jail for debt, *ibid.*, p. 97.
42. He was in London at Convocation in May, 1711. It was at this time he secured admission for John to school in London. Hurst I, p. 118.
43. Curnock, vol. 3, p. 33.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. Hurst I, pp. 79-80.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Hurst I, p. 124.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-4.
3. *Letters* I, p. 1. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Edited by John Telford, London, Epworth Press, Standard (First Edition). Hereafter referred to as "*Letters*." Not to be taken as Telford's *Life of John Wesley*, herein designated as "Telford."
4. Telford, p. 25.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
6. Hurst, vol. I, p. 98.
7. Telford, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
10. Written in 1719 to Samuel Wesley, Sr., Whitehead, p. 234. Also, Hurst I, p. 147. Samuel Wesley, Jr., had become an usher at Westminster School about the time John entered Charterhouse. The two schools were near each other, so visits were easy. He was "head usher for about twenty years," Clarke, p. 433.
11. Hurst I, pp. 137-8 says forty pounds. Telford says twenty, *Letters* I, p. 4, Note two. This appears to be correct.
12. *Letters* IV, p. 106, Note 1.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Tyerman I, p. 19.
15. Pursuant to John's ordination as priest, his father, to satisfy the Bishop concerning his son's age, wrote him this record: "Epworth, August 23, 1728. John Wesley, M.A. Fellow of Lincoln College, was twenty-five years old on the 17th of June last, having been baptized a few hours after his birth, by me, Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth." Whitehead, p. 231.
16. His father died in 1735, on April 25th, three years before John came to have personal, inner assurance.
17. Romans 8:16.
18. *Letters* II, pp. 134-5.
19. December 31, 1696.
20. Son-in-law. He jilted Kezzy Wesley and married Martha. His later activities made their lives a tragedy.
21. Curnock, vol. 2, pp. 267-8.
22. Clarke, p. 378.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 382.

24. Tyerman, I, p. 22. Quoted by Lunn, p. 20.
25. Lunn, p. 20.
26. It is needful to note there is a difference between the *Diaries* and the *Journal*. Throughout his life, John wrote both. His *Diaries* began probably in 1721, following a practice of his grandfather's. In 1725, John began keeping "a more exact account" than previously "of the manner wherein he spent his time." These *Diaries* were written for his own eye. Hence, some are in cipher; some in a system of shorthand; some in a shorthand he and Charles used; and some in abbreviations and figures he alone understood. Until quite recently, they were untranslated but now have been so done, though not published.
 Later, as need arose, John expanded sections of these *Diaries* into "Extracts." These are the *Journals*.
 Curnock I, pp. 36-77 has a thorough exposition of these *Diaries*.
27. Curnock, I, p. 51.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
29. The original is in the Greek: *Kyrie Eleéson*.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Hurst I, p. 159. Quoted from Southey, who said the diarist wrote in 1746.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 164. An example of his humor is a poem, entitled "Chloe's Flea," written in June, 1724, and sent to Samuel, Sr. It is given in *Letters* I, pp. 8-9. It reminds one of Robert Burns' poem "To a Louse" but is less chaste than that.
3. *Letters* I, p. 6.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
5. See Quiller-Couch's *Hetty Wesley*, chaps. 1-2.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. *Letters* VI, p. 292.
8. Curnock I, p. 466.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 466-7.
10. *Works of John Wesley*, vol. VI, p. 484 says, "In the year 1726." The edition of the works herein quoted is the "First American Edition," seven vols., edited by John Emory and published by him and B. Waugh, N. Y., 1831. Referred to as "Works." The latest complete edition was published 1958, by Zondervan.
11. Simon I, p. 78.

12. Curnock I, p. 41.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.
14. *Ibid.* Clarke wrote, "It was probably his example, which he must have known, that led his grandson, the founder of the Methodists, to follow the same practice." P. 37. See also, Whitehead, p. 18.
15. Curnock I, p. 42.
16. These *Diaries* he began on April 5, 1725. Simon I, p. 79.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Hurst I, p. 165.
21. Tyerman, p. 27.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
23. Whitehead, p. 237.
24. Tyerman I, p. 32.
25. *Letters* I, p. 15.
26. He died April 25, 1735.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Daniel 9:2.
2. Dates of the publication of these three books are: Taylor, 1650; Kempis, 1441; Law, 1726. This seems to be the order in which Wesley read them; for, in his letter of May 14, 1765, he wrote that "soon after" reading Taylor he was "much confirmed" in what he had read there by what he found in Kempis. Curnock v, p. 117.
3. Taylor, pp. 26–7. Quotes herein from Jeremy Taylor are from an American edition of 1831, printed by H. & F. J. Huntington, at Hartford (Conn.). Referred to here as "Taylor."
4. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 28–33.
6. Wesley's preface to his *Journal*, Curnock I, p. 83.
7. Taylor, p. 35.
8. Matthew 22:15–22. Note an example of it in Acts 18: 14–15.
9. John Wesley never varied from this matter of intention. In 1735, *en route* to Georgia, he laid the foundation of his thirteen sermons on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which were published in 1771, Curnock I, pp. 116–7. See Sermon XXVIII, Par. 2. The letter just quoted was written on May 14, 1765. In 1789, he returned to this theme in Sermon CXXII. In each, his understanding of intention was, "What the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul."

- The sermon references herein are to the edition, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, New York, pub. by Carlton and Phillips, 1853.
10. *Letters* I, p. 18.
 11. *Ibid.* The woman doubtless was Betty Kirkham, Curnock I, p. 16, Note 1. That she read Taylor at all shows courage enough to tackle solid reading. Her criticism was natural for one of her age.
 12. Whitehead, p. 240.
 13. *Letters* I, pp. 21–22.
 14. In his *New Testament Notes*, he thus comments on this clause: "Whatever a man does without a full persuasion of its lawfulness, it is sin to him."
 15. Whitehead, pp. 242–3.
 16. Curnock I, p. 52.
 17. I Peter 5:5, and James 4:6.
 18. Verses 8–9. See also verses 12, 14.
 19. Matthew 11:29.
 20. Letter of Nov. 25, 1730, to Mrs. Pendarves. *Letters* I, p. 63.
 21. Tyerman I, p. 40.
 22. Taylor, pp. xx–xxi. Compare with this John Wesley's description of himself before Aldersgate, given in Sermon II, "The Almost Christian," part I, paragraph 13.
 23. Hurst I, p. 174.
 24. Chapter IV, "Of Christian Religion," section IX.
 25. Section X, Taylor, p. 213, which Wesley is almost quoting.
 26. Letter of June 18, 1725. *Letters* I, pp. 17ff.
 27. Chapter IV, section IX.
 28. Luther's discovery of this, he reports thus: "This saying of yours clung to me like the sharp arrow of a potent archer. Forthwith I began to compare it with the various Scriptural passages that teach the doctrine of penitence; when lo! there transacted itself in my experience the most joyful sport and game that ever was. The Bible words on all hands took part with me in the play, laughing out and dancing their joyful acquiescence in this opinion of yours. Formerly there had hardly, within the whole range of Scripture, been a more bitter word for me than this same 'penitence'—and that although I had sedulously tried to disguise my true feelings from God and to express, as sincere, an affection that was feigned, and as free, an affection that was forced. Now nothing in all the Bible has for me a sweeter or more grateful sound than penitence. For thus do the commands of God melt into sweetness when we under-

- stand that they are to be read not merely in printed books but in the wounds of the sweetest Saviour." *Martin Luther, His Life and Work*, by Peter Bayne, LL.D., Cassell & Co. Limited, New York, 1887, pp. 197-8.
29. Chapter IV, section IX, part Two, "Acts and Parts of Repentance," par. 9.
 30. The list is: "Means of atonement and expiation. . . . With special purpose and intendment for all the elect. . . . Sending up a gracious instrument. . . . They receive Christ within them, and therefore may also offer him to God. . . . A day of traffic and intercourse with heaven. . . . Pray Him [Christ, that is] to enter and dwell forever. . . . Christ in the elements does enter into the body to support and nourish the spirit. . . . It hath pleased Him to make these mysteries to be sensible. . . . We are ravished and comprehended with the infiniteness of so vast and mysterious a mercy. . . . The elements are holy in their use, holy in their signification, holy in their change, and holy in their effect. . . . Christ shall be present to thy soul. . . . Christ indwelling." Pp. 209, 211, 212.
 31. Chap. IV, section X, part Two, par. 1, p. 213.
 32. Tyerman I, pp. 37-8.
 33. July 29, 1725.
 34. Hebrews 11:6.
 35. *Letters* I, pp. 22-3.
 36. *Hetty Wesley*, Quiller-Couch, p. 143.
 37. *Bolts of Melody*, Emily Dickinson, Harpers, 1945, No. 180.
 38. *Letters* v, p. 203.
 39. Isaiah 55:8-9.
 40. I Corinthians 2: 2-16, and 1:30.
 41. Acts 18:6, "Henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles"—a radical change made at Corinth.
 42. Curnock v, p. 117.
 43. I Corinthians 2:14.
 44. Whitehead, pp. 243-4.
 45. I Corinthians 2:10.
 46. John 14:26.
 47. *Letters* I, p. 25.
 48. Curnock I, p. 47. Other examples are: his "Oxford Rules"; "Twelve Rules of a Helper"; and "Rules of the United Societies," *ibid.*, p. 51.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Wesley has an excellent sketch of Kempis' life in *Works* vii, pp. 510-18.
2. *Letters* i, p. 16.
3. Curnock i, p. 466.
4. *Letters* i, p. 15.
5. Curnock's research identifies Betty as the person who got him to read Kempis. Vol. i, pp. 12-16. Mrs. Harrison seems to say it was Sally, *Son to Susanna*, G. Elsie Harrison, Cokesbury, Nashville, 1938, p. 68f. So, too, does Church, p. 39.
6. What the bearing of Stanhope's translation was upon his dissatisfaction is not said. George Stanhope, 1660-1728, became Dean of Canterbury in 1703, the year Wesley was born. He wrote half a dozen books, one of which was this of Kempis', published in 1696. McClintock & Strong, vol. 9, p. 987.
7. *Letters* i, p. 16.
8. Whitehead, p. 239.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See her complete letter in Clarke, pp. 330-33.
11. "Whatever is 'compatible with a love to Christ and a work of grace,' I term an opinion. . . . 'Is a man a believer in Jesus Christ and is his life suitable to his profession?' are not only the *main* but the *sole* inquiries I make in order to his admission into our Society. If he is a Dissenter, he may be a Dissenter still. . . ." Written May 14, 1765, *Letters* iv, p. 297.
12. *Letters* i, p. 18.
13. *Letters* i, pp. 178-9.
14. *Ibid.* viii, pp. 268-9. Her notes for a reply are given.
15. Book i, chap. i, par. 20.
16. *Ibid.*, par. 12.
17. Book ii, chap. xii, par. 5.
18. Book iii, chap. xi, par. 8.
19. Book iii, chap. xxxvii, par. 1.
20. Book iii, chap. xlii, par. 4.
21. Book iii, chap. lii, pars. 2 & 4. Quotes from Kempis herein are from the Everyman's Library Edition, E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1916. Ample justification for its use is given in the introduction: "The book is full of slight mistakes and of (to us) infelicitous Latinisms of vocabulary and syntax; but none can question the

quaint beauty and the mystical charm which the vague phrases leave upon the ear. The *Imitation* ought never to be shown to the reading public in an entirely modern dress. . . ."

22. May 14, 1765. *Letters* IV, pp. 298-99.
23. *Works* VI, p. 483, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," whose final form was written in 1771.
24. Part II, chap. 1.
25. Part III, chap. I.
26. Part II, chap. 4.
27. An old way of writing the numeral ii.
28. See Romans, chaps. 1-8 and 12-15; Galatians, chaps. 1-4 and 5-6; and Ephesians, chaps. 1-4 and 5-6. The first sets of chapters deal with the ways by which a sinner becomes a Christian: the second sets treat of the life, conduct, etc., of a Christian. This is the Gospel pattern. Its most succinct statement is in Romans 5:10. The most compact statement of the first part of it is in John 3:16. These two verses summarize the Gospel of Christ.
29. *Letters* I, p. 40; p. 364.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 364.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 43. Robin Griffiths, son of the Vicar of Broadway, died Jan. 10, 1727. *Letters* I, p. 41, Note 1.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. The sermon was from II Samuel 12:23. For more data upon Robin Griffiths' death and burial, see Curnock I, p. 62.
33. Matthew 13:38.
34. Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, August 24, 1744.
35. For quite full data, see Curnock I, pp. 13-15.
36. Curnock is quite sure it is Betty, *ibid.* Elsie Harrison is sure it is Sally. *Son to Susanna*, chap. VII. Church agrees, p. 39.
37. Curnock I, p. 467.
38. Clarke, p. 239.
39. *Holy Living*, Taylor, p. 207. Compare this with the "Prayer of Consecration" in *The Methodist Communion Ritual*.
40. Curnock I, p. 472. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," Mark 12:34, is Jesus' locating the spiritual position of the sincere and discerning scribe.
41. Curnock I, p. 52.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 467.
43. Tyerman I, pp. 36-37.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. *Letters* I, p. 34.
2. *Ibid.*, Telford's footnote.
3. A letter of his, dated April 4, was written at Lincoln. Thus he was there at that date and must have left thereafter. *Letters* I, p. 29. See also Whitehead, p. 248; Tyerman I, p. 247; Simon, p. 83; and *Letters* I, p. 34.
4. Tyerman I, p. 56.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 57. Hurst I, p. 177.
6. Hurst I, p. 187. This statement is inexact; for he had plenty of parochial work in Georgia. Telford is correct in affirming "this was the only experience he had as an English parish clergyman." Pp. 53-4.
7. Curnock I, pp. 21-22.
8. For a detailed reconstruction of the occurrence, see *Hetty Wesley*, by Quiller-Couch. Also, John's letter of Dec. 6, 1726, to brother Samuel, *Letters* I, pp. 35ff.
9. Letter of Dec. 6, 1726. This jilting of Hetty occurred in 1725. "In the end of the year [Clarke, pp. 536-7, giving Whitehead as authority] Hetty married a William Wright, a glazier, a drunkard. By him, she bore four children, all of whom died in infancy. Her poetic genius was near that of Charles. Her poem, "A Mother's Address to Her Dying Infant," written of her third child, is one of the finest writings of its kind. Her anguish over the child's dying and her own tragic, harsh life appear in her closing prayer:

"When deadly damps, impending now,
 Shall hover round thy destin'd brow,
 Diffusive may their influence be,
 And with the blossom blast the tree!"

Quiller-Couch, pp. 232-33

- Hetty died March 21, 1750, aged 53. Tyerman II, pp. 74-5.
10. Quiller-Couch, pp. 167-9. He cites no documents for this. I would regard it as overdrawn. However, it is not improbable; for John, even in this case, talked bluntly, privately and publicly to his father.
 11. *Letters* I, p. 36.
 12. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7. He does not tell what he said in either. One can obtain some idea of his position from three of his sermons. See that on "Christian Charity," No. XCVI, preached around 1735 or

- 1738, part I, par. 7 and part II, par. 7, 12. What he might have said on rash judging can be seen in Sermon XXX. See also his ideas upon reproof "particularly due" to parents in Sermon LXX, part II, par. 4. See, too, his Sermon CI on "Obedience to Parents."
13. Later also did so. See the letters between her and her father in Quiller-Couch, pp. 235-8.
14. Samuel Wesley, Jr., did not oppose John concerning Hetty's guilt or the sincerity of her repentance or of the degree of love to be accorded her, whether she were repentant or not. He opposed John for what he averred was his violation of clerical canon by preaching these two sermons under the existing conditions. His refutation of his brother's charge he gave in his letter of Dec. 6. 1726.
15. Letter just mentioned. Dr. Samuel Clarke, 1675-1729, chaplain to Queen Anne, a religious writer and controversialist. McClintock & Strong, II, pp. 366-8. Bishop Francis Atterbury, 1662-1731, made Bishop of Rochester by Queen Anne. *Ibid.*, p. 527.
16. John 3:17. Of his own father's preaching, John wrote: "Neither have I heard him, neither did he himself or any other person inform me, that he ever preached at all in Wroote Church on that subject," universal charity. Letter of Dec. 6, 1726.
17. Romans 5:8.
18. Curnock I, p. 467.
19. *Brit.*, article on "Law."
20. So quoted by Hurst I, p. 189.
21. Telford, p. 100. Quoted from John Byrom's *Journal*. See also Curnock I, p. 463, Note 2, for data on Dr. Heylyn.
22. *Brit.*, *loc. cit.*
23. *The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon*, Everyman's Library, E. P. Dutton, N. Y. No date, p. 19.
24. *Brit.*, Vol. 13, p. 2.
25. *American Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 17, p. 86.
26. His *Autobiography*, pp. 17-18. The other aunt was Catherine, who in 1756 married Edward Ellison, p. 26. She had no sympathy with Hester's ways of living.
27. As an example, see Gibbon's quote of Law's denunciation of the contemporary theatre, *ibid.*, p. 17.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Letters* I, p. 240.
30. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 299. This was written in May, 1765. At times, he gave approximate dates. Since Law's *Christian Perfection* was published

in 1726, he could have read it in 1727: but since the *Serious Call* was not published until 1728, he could not have read it in 1727. In this same letter, he said he read Taylor's book in 1725, but the 1739 Preface to the *Journal* says he did so "about fifteen years ago," which would be 1724. The *Serious Call* confirmed Wesley in his early rising as redeeming time from sleep. Sermon XCVIII, part II, par. 9, where he quotes Law.

31. Romans 7:18.
32. John 1:13.
33. Curnock I, p. 469, Note 2. Quoted from Henry Moore's *Life of Wesley*. This man, Curnock took to be most probably Mr. Hoole, Rector at Haxey. *Ibid.* Hurst also has this counsel, I, p. 187.
34. In 1747, writing the preface to a publication of some of his sermons, he said, "I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore." *Sermons* I, p. 6, par. 5.
35. H. H. Kroll, *The Long Quest*, Westminster Press, Phila., 1954. The author cites no source; but, since he begins his quotation with the same question as that of the "serious man," this old man might be that person. However, there is a probability that one of them was Mr. William Romley of Burton, near Epworth. See *Works*, vol. iv, p. 18, and Telford, p. 54.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Feb. 2, 1747, Curnock III, pp. 276-7.
2. Might have been Stanton-Harcourt, *Letters* I, p. 48, Note 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 137, Note 1.
5. Curnock for May 14, 1765, vol. v, p. 117. See also, *John Wesley's Prayers*, Edited by F. C. Gill, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1951, p. 7.
6. Letter of March 4, 1735, *Letters* I, p. 181.
7. Letter to her of Feb. 15, 1733. The reason for that waning might is in its third paragraph: "The more I think of the reason you gave me at Epworth for speaking little upon religious subjects, the less it satisfies me. 'We shall all be of your mind when we are of your age.' But who will assure us we will ever be of that age? Or suppose we should, is it not better to be of that mind sooner? Is not a right faith of use at thirty as well as at sixty? and are not the actions that flow from a right faith as rewardable now as then?"

I trust they are, and do therefore earnestly desire that, whatever general or particular rules of life your own reflection and experience have suggested to you, I may be tried whether I will conform to them or no."

8. *Christian Perfection*, Fenelon; edited in 1947 by C. F. Whiston; translated by Mildred W. Stillman; Harpers.
9. See Tyerman I, pp. 60ff. More full is Simon I, pp. 69-71.
10. *Ibid.*, I, p. 65.
11. The dean of Christ Church College, where Charles Wesley was a tutor, "forbade the posting of this edict in his college hall." *Ibid.*, p. 66.
12. The list of the Club's practices is given in Chapter 11. The edict is in Jackson, pp. 34-35.
13. *Letters* I, p. 65, Note 2.
14. Whitehead, p. 256. Kroll, p. 84, says a young man came to John at Wroote claiming he had been sent to invite Wesley to become rector.
15. Curnock I, p. 90, Note 4.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 89, Note 4.
17. "In 1727," Charles Wesley wrote in 1785. *Life of Charles Wesley*, by Thomas Jackson, N. Y., G. Lane & P. P. Sandford, 1844, p. 725. Hereafter referred to as "Jackson."
18. Simon I, p. 85, quoting Henry Moore, who "knew him [C. W.] well."
19. Jackson, p. 725.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
21. *Ibid.* Read John's sermon, "The Duty of Reproving Our Neighbour," on the text of Leviticus 19:17. It was written in the 1780's.
22. Jackson, pp. 30-1. Also, Whitehead, p. 73.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 31. Simon I, p. 87, gives the day as the 29th.
24. Jackson, pp. 725-6.
25. John's letter of Feb. 28, 1730, refers to the time of his joining by the phrase, "a little while ago." *Letters* I, p. 48. Or it might refer to his accepting more of the Wesley ways.
26. Curnock I, pp. 467-70.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Jackson, pp. 31-2.
2. *Letters* I, p. 64.

3. It is likely the source of this quotation was written by Samuel Wesley, Sr. See his letter to John in Clarke, pp. 238–41, and the editor's footnote.

The letter thus reads in part: "I took some pains, a year or two since, in drawing up some advices to Mr. Hoole's brother, then to be my curate at Epworth, before his ordination, which may be useful to you . . . but you must return them me again, I having no copy; and pray let none but yourself see them."

Writing to John Wesley in 1737, George Whitefield said, "I received benefit from your father's advice to a young clergyman."

A "literary friend" of the editor of Clarke's book, he said in a footnote, told him, "I have lately perused a work, *The Clergyman's Vade Mecum*, which I am inclined to believe was compiled by Samuel Wesley, the elder." See also *Letters* iv, 119.

4. Quoted from letter of Dec. 12, 1760, Vol. iv, pp. 119–20.
5. Letter of June 14, 1786, vol. vii, p. 331. Also, in Sermon CXII, "On God's Vineyard," written about 1779, part I, par. 1.
6. Sermon CXII, introductory par.
7. Sermon LXXI, part II, par. 10. And Sermon LXXIII, part I, par. 1.
8. Matthew 16:3.
9. Henry Scougal, 1650–78. Son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister. Precocious, fond of books and apt in languages. In his short twenty-eight years, he graduated from college; became an instructor therein; then, professor of philosophy; and, finally, professor of divinity. His *Life of God in the Soul of Man* was written in 1677 as letters to a friend. It has been reissued in many editions. It was a copy of this book, given him by Charles Wesley, which had a powerful effect upon George Whitefield. Jackson, p. 39.
10. *Letters* i, pp. 128–9. Hurst ii, p. 680, refers to it, saying Henry Venn wrote, as an "evangelical counterblast" to it, his *Complete Duty of Man*, published in 1763. *Brit.* vol. 23, p. 67.
11. See Note 3 above.
12. *Letters* i, p. 161, Note 2.
13. Curnock v, p. 117.
14. Isaiah 8:19–20. Cf. Isaiah 19:3. Upon John Wesley and the Bible, read the preface to his *Sermons*, in vol. i, pars. 3–5.
15. Hurst i, p. 327.
16. Curnock v, p. 117. *Letters* iv, p. 229. The italics are in this. Compare also similar statements in Wesley's "Character of a Metho-

dist," *Works* v, pp. 241-2, par. 5. And his "Advice to the People Called Methodists," *ibid.*, p. 249, par. 3.

17. Hurst I, p. 202.

18. *Baptism Ritual* reads: "Of Infants. Our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost. . . . Seeing . . . these Persons are regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church. . . ." *Book of Common Prayer*, 1845. See also, Article of Religion XXVII, "A Sign of Regeneration, or New-Birth."

19. "Restitution to the state of righteousness and holy living, of which we covenanted in baptism." Taylor's *Holy Living*, chap. IV, section IX, par. 2. This is more justification than regeneration. One distinguishes easily the ideas of these two experiences, but their occurrence and recognition in experience could be either simultaneous or more or less distinctly separate.

20. *Baptism Ritual of The Methodist Church*.

21. For his matured teaching upon this doctrine, see Sermon XLV on "The New Birth," from the text of John 3:7. Therein, he differentiates between baptism and the new birth: they are "not the same thing"; nor do they "constantly go together."

Then he makes the significant distinction between infants and those of "riper years." He wrote: "I do not now speak with regard to infants: it is certain our church supposes, that all who are baptized in their infancy, are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years." Part IV, par. 2. See also, his *New Testament Notes*, on John 3:1-5.

22. Excellent, indeed, is Wesley's detail of this analogy in his sermon, "The New Birth," part II, par. 4.

23. Letter to his mother, June 18. *Letters* I, pp. 19-20.

24. Telford, p. 55.

25. See his letter of May 21, 1781, to one of his teachers, Mary Bishop, wherein he specifies his educational aims as: the making of Christians, useful learning, scholarship, and good breeding. These are a grading, beginning with the highest. See also his three Sermons: XCIX, on "Family Religion"; C, on "The Education of Children"; and CI, on "Obedience to Parents."

26. Telford, p. 56.
27. *Letters* I, p. 48.
28. I Corinthians 13:13.
29. Taylor's *Holy Dying*, chap. V, section 5, par. 2. Alterations in John's spelling and punctuation I have taken from this book of Taylor's.
30. For Wesley's teaching, see Sermon XLV, "The New Birth," part IV, par. 3.
31. See Sermon I, "Salvation by Faith," Introduction, pars. 1-3.
32. See Sermon X, "The Witness of the Spirit," from Romans 8:16; Sermon XI on the same text; and Sermon XII, "The Witness of Our Own Spirit," from II Corinthians 1:12.
33. Letters of these dates.

James Rigg's characterization of this correspondence is:

"In all other correspondence, before as well as after this period of his life, Wesley is always clear, neat, and parsimonious of words; simple, chaste, and unaffected. In this correspondence on the contrary, he is stilted, sentimental, I had almost said affected, certainly unreal, certainly at times fulsome, when he has to speak of the lady herself, or attempts to turn a compliment. One almost wonders how the lady, who never forgets herself, and whose style is always natural and proper, was able to bear the style in which he addressed her. It is only when a question of religious casuistry or of theology, of duty or of devotion, is to be dealt with, that Wesley is himself again; then, his style is singularly in contrast with what it is in respect to points of personality or of sentiment. His expressions of regard and admiration are as high-flown as if they belonged to a Spanish romance; his discussions are clear and close. It is hard to understand how the same man could be the writer of all these letters." *The Living Wesley*, James H. Rigg, D.D., Second Edition, Charles H. Kelly, London, 1891, p. 50.

34. Curnock I, p. 90. Hurst I, p. 202. The visit was at 2.30 P.M.
35. These items are from John's account of the Holy Club's beginnings, written in a letter to William Morgan's father on October 18, 1732. His son William became ill in June 1731; June 5, 1732, he left Oxford for Dublin, Ireland, where he died on August 26th.

Letters I, p. 121. John's austere practices were blamed for his death, even by the father, Richard Morgan, Sr. To set matters straight, John wrote him this full account of the Club's work.

36. *Letters* I, p. 65.
37. Church, p. 51.
38. Hurst I, pp. 205-6.
39. Sketch of, *Brit.*, vol. 11, p. 847.
40. Sketch of, *ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 888.
41. Curnock I, p. 35.
42. Sermon C, par. 4.
43. Longfellow's "Footsteps of Angels," stanza 4.
44. Curnock I, p. 51. A band was this. When Wesley's work spread, his care for his converts developed certain practices. In a given community, all these formed a Society. Each Society was divided into groups of ten or twelve, called Classes, each of which was under a Leader. Each Class met at least once a week. Every group has a few very zealous persons in it. The Methodist Societies had them. These, he formed into bands. Besides their meeting with their Classes, these ardent persons met also each Saturday evening, the purpose being cultivation of religious life.
45. Curnock IV, p. 192, Note 2.
46. *Letters* I, p. 76.
47. Chapter Five.
48. *John Wesley*, by Bishop F. J. McConnell, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939.
49. French philosopher, 1596-1650.
50. *Story of Philosophy*, Will Durant, Simon and Schuster, N. Y. 1927, pp. 166-7.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-215, 279ff. Also, McConnell, pp. 326-8. He wrote: "Wesley had created a fact-situation which the Hume skepticism did not touch. Wesley taught a reliance upon emotion—upon feeling in its upper reaches—as the method of communion with the divine." This is a bit inaccurate. Wesley's teaching was this: any sinner can contact the Divine by faith in the atonement of Christ. That contact is evidenced in three ways—by the witness of one's own spirit; by the witness of the Holy Spirit; and by a life agreeing with the change to which these testified. Subsequent "communion with the divine" depended upon this last, which comprised Bible reading, prayer, communion, public and private worship, and

- what we now term "service." For "feeling in its upper reaches," there is a place, but its subjectivity must be complemented by wide objectivities, the first of which is the assurance of the Holy Spirit.
52. *Letters*, vol. III, p. 153. The entire letter is in *ibid.*, pp. 332-370. It will be discussed at length in Chapter Eighteen.
 53. Curnock, Dec. 6, 1756, vol. 4, p. 192.
 54. *Letters* v, p. 270.
 55. Sermons LXXIV and LXXV.
 56. See Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 31:31-4; John 1:4, 3:11, 5:26, 6:44, 7:17, 8:12, 38; and I Corinthians 2:9-12.
 57. *Letters* I, pp. 125-6.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 65 and Note 5. For the range of their services, see *Letters* I, p. 129, Part iv.

CHAPTER TEN

1. *Letters* I, pp. 73ff. Deferred from January by Ann's illness.
2. Letter of April 14; and *Letters* I, p. 85, Note 1. They left Oxford on April 18. Whitehead, p. 266.
3. Whitehead, p. 265. Was the "Dr.—" a Dr. Terry? *Ibid.*, pp. 265-66. Samuel, Jr., confronted him about his brothers and, probably, about the action of the Senior Fellows. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
5. *Letters* I, p. 85, Note 1.
6. These are: Exodus 32:6; Ecclesiastes 2:1,3, 8:15, 9:7; Isaiah 22:13; Luke 12:19; and I Corinthians 15:32.
7. *Brit.*, vol. 11, p. 742.
8. Matthew 23:23.
9. *Ibid.*, v. 4.
10. Simon I, p. 319.
11. Molly Vazeille and John Wesley were married on February 18 or 19, 1751. *Letters* III, p. 62.
12. Curnock, 4, p. 12. The time mentioned would be around that of the visit of June, 1731.
13. Simon III, *The Advance of Methodism*, p. 217. That world to come was a continuing, steadying, stimulating and deciding power in Wesley's life. He saw and understood the Pauline alternative of I Corinthians 15:32. See his *N.T. Notes* on vv. 30,32; Sermon LIV, pars. 11, 18; Sermon XCIX, par. 16. Also, see Susannah's letter to him of Jan. 31, 1727, in Clarke, pp. 335-6.

14. Curnock IV, p. 13.
15. *Letters* I, p. 89.
16. His letter of Sept. 27, 1730, shows something of a reckoning with death. There, he fears its advent before he can obtain certain objectives. Throughout his quest, a fear of death will be understood by him as indicating he does not possess the religious something he is seeking.
17. Gospel of John, chap. 4.
18. Revelation 22:18. See Deuteronomy 4:2, 5:22, 12:32.
19. Letter of November 17, 1731.
20. This last sentence is a reference to the O.T. Apocrypha book, *Wisdom of Solomon*, chap. 5, wherein the persecuting but beaten wicked shall say of the persecuted but victorious righteous, "We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour: how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!" *Apocrypha*, edited by Manuel Komroff, 1949, p. 134. Tudor Pub. Co., N. Y.
21. Curnock I, p. 467.
22. *Letters* I, p. 101.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
24. See, Proverbs 28:9; John 11:42; Hebrews 11:6; and James 1:5,6; 4:2-3.
25. Matthew 22:30.
26. See Luther on the validation of the communion in his "Treatise on the New Testament," *Works*, 1915, vol. I, pp. 294-326.
27. *Letters* I, p. 106.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
30. Philippians 3:12. The Greek is *Teteleiomai*. The verbs *Teleo* and *Teleio* seems to be different; thus: the first means "an end seen, accepted and striven for"; the second, "an end realized." On this text, see Wesley's *N.T. Notes*.
31. See his excellent, succinct par. 6 of part II of Sermon I on "Salvation by Faith."
32. Whitehead, p. 67.
33. Hurst I, p. 211.
34. I John 3:14.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Judges 5: 15-16.
2. Sermon CVI. Simon dates it "about the year 1733," I, p. 103.
3. Tyerman I, p. 82.
4. Sermon CVI, part I, par. 4. The treatment of the noncommunicant is found in the "Canons of the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Scribner's, 1925. Reprint of Edinburgh Edition of 1885, vol. VII, p. 501, canon 10.
5. How this does so is shown in Sermon XVI, "Means of Grace," part V, par. 1.
6. Sermon on "Constant Communion," part II, par. 3. The canon quoted has the same position; for the persons excommunicated are those who are in the Church but who do not commune—that is, they can but will not.
 In part II, par. 21, Wesley designates failure to communicate as often as one can as showing a lack of Christian prudence. This seems to rate constant communion as a prudential rule.
7. He is referring to I Corinthians 11:29.
8. These are a recension of his quotation. Whence the quote came is not indicated. It is from the Communion Ritual of the Church of England. Wesley abbreviated it a bit; and after "Saviour" inserted this parenthesis: "(and observe, that word is not taken in its highest sense)." Did he mean faith was not so meant here? or Saviour? Could he have meant faith as not saving or Christ as not redeeming? Or both as not regenerating? His two closing sentences in this paragraph indicate a modified relation or work.
9. For an excellent summary of his teaching, see Curnock II, pp. 361-2. Also, his "Answer to Mr. Church," *Letters* II, pp. 202-3. This apologia was titled, "The Principles of a Methodist," *Works* V, pp. 255ff. The June quote is on p. 285. He repeats the same positions to the Bishop of London, *Works* V, pp. 343-4, and in *Letters* II, p. 282.
10. *Letters* I, p. 118.
11. The first means Christ's presence along with the elements: the second, the elements being Christ's body.
12. Curnock II, p. 361. See *Works* V, p. 285.
13. For Sept. 3, 1739, the *Journal* reads: "I talked largely with my mother, who told me that, till a short time ago, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as having the forgiveness of sins

now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit; much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven *me* all *my* sins.' John asked her whether or not her father knew such an experience, she answered he said he had known it for forty years. However, she did not remember his ever preaching it and concluded it was "the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God. Curnock II, p. 267.

14. Matthew 17:7-9.
15. II Chronicles 15:3.
16. Chapter 4, Section III.
17. Colossians 3:14.
18. I Corinthians 12:8.
19. Acts 26:24. Paul's ministry had a heavy intellectual approach. See Acts 8:22; 15:2; 17:17-18.
20. The adjective is in the comparative degree. Most versions have "New." Wesley's New Testament notes the comparative but does not have it in the text.
21. Similar, this is, to his outburst to Ann Granville in his letter of Sept. 27, 1730.
22. *Letters* I, pp. 121-22.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
24. Whitehead, p. 273.
25. Due to the fact he was leaving Westminster in London for a school in Tiverton in Devonshire. The word "hasty" is Adam Clarke's. P. 445.
26. Tyerman I, p. 83.
27. Hurst I, p. 211. A later and larger list is in Tyerman I, p. 67.
28. *Letters* I, p. 132, Note.
29. *Simon* I, p. 96.
30. *Letters* I, p. 274. He did not minimize the Church, however; for his letter continues: "But have a care of bending the bow too much the other way. The National Church, to which we belong, may doubtless claim some, but not an implicit, obedience from us. And the Primitive Church may, thus far at least, be revered as faith-

- fully delivering down for two or three hundred years the discipline which they received from the apostles, and the apostles from Christ.
31. Rigg, p. 97.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
 33. Hurst I, p. 208.
 34. Whitehead, p. 275. Tyerman I, p. 83.
 35. Whitehead, p. 276.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
 37. Tyerman I, p. 85, says, apropos of Mr. Richard Morgan, Sr.'s letter of August 1 to John Wesley, "a fortnight after." Simon puts this publication of the letter on Dec. 9, 1732. I, p. 97.
 38. A résumé is given by Tyerman I, pp. 85-6.
 39. This visit is recorded, as far as I find, only by John Simon. Law's report was published anonymously: first in 1733; again in 1737 and 1738. Simon I, pp. 97-8. Tyerman has the identity of the letter's author thus: "a letter from a gent near Oxford, to his friend in London," I, p. 86. He says nothing of the rebuttal pamphlet.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. His *New Testament Notes* refers this to Deut. 30:6. See Deut. 10:16.
2. It is likely the university did this, since he was preaching officially in his turn as fellow; and since such sermons appear to have been published.
3. *Letters* IV, p. 299.
4. Matthew 5:48.
5. Wesley here is using Romans 8:16. It clearly recognizes a double inner witness: the direct objective testimony of the Holy Spirit and that of one's own soul. The evidence of the latter is the peace of chap. 5:1 and the absence of condemnation of chap. 8:1. The first testimony of the Holy Spirit is the love of God of chap. 5:5.
There begins here a doctrine of double assurance, which he will maintain steadily all his life. His matured teaching upon it will be found in these sermons: X and XI, on "The Witness of the Spirit," both from Rom. 8:16; and XII, "The Witness of Our Own Spirit," whose text is II Corinthians 1:12.
6. Sugden says: "This whole paragraph is taken almost verbally from Law's *Christian Perfection*." *The Standard Sermons of John Wes-*

ley, edited by E. H. Sugden, London, Epworth Press, Fourth Edition, 1955, vol. 1, p. 278, note on par. 8.

7. His *Cestus of Aglaia*, Everyman's Library Edition, E. P. Dutton, 1915, chap. 1, p. 123.
8. Sermon CXXXV.
9. Wesley here might have had in mind verse 5 of Rom. 5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given us." To him, the content of *perfectio*, or holiness, was love of God and, thence, love of men.
10. I Cor. 6:19.
11. John uses the language of Rev. 6:17-7:1-4.
12. 2 Cor. 1:22. Used also in 5:5 and in Eph. 1:14.
13. "Earnest" is the English rendering of the Greek, *ärräbō'n*. It is a near transliteration of the Hebrew, *ēräbō'n*. It means the down payment at the conclusion of any transaction. In modern Greek, *ärräbō'nä* means an "engagement ring." Thus, Christ's down payment to one who accepts Him is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Using the N.T. figure of bride and groom as stating Christ's relation to His Church, the engagement ring He gives is the Holy Spirit.
14. Tyerman I, p. 91.
15. *Letters* I, p. 133.
16. Tyerman I, p. 91.
17. *Letters* I, p. 134.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Sermon LV, section I, par. 3.
20. Acts 4:32. John wrote that, according to Tertullian, this early Christian community of possessions continued "at least in many churches" into Tertullian's time. Sermon LV, section I, par. 3.
21. Later, after John's conversion, and especially after his preaching in the fields, he would have nothing to do with him. Hurst I, p. 208; *Letters* I, p. 132.
22. They can be found in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VII, pp. 391-505. Simon says Clayton indirectly brought John and Charles Wesley to studying these books by introducing them to Thomas Deacon of Manchester. He was a bishop, and also a practicing physician. Simon I, pp. 100, 102-3.
23. Hurst I, p. 168.
24. *Letters* I, p. 132.
25. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VII, book V, chap. XIV, p. 445. See

also the "Teaching of the Twelve," *ibid.*, chap. VIII, p. 379. Christ did commend fasting, Matthew 17:21. He Himself fasted, Matt. 4:2. He said His disciples would and should fast, Matt. 9:14-15. But there is no command of His for fasting on Wednesdays or Fridays, unless His words, "the days, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them," are understood quite specifically as referring to the events of Holy Week. Certainly, His betrayal took Him from them in point of former association; His death, in point of former physical presence.

26. Hurst I, p. 208.
27. Dated A.D. 160. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II, book III, similarly, book V, chap. 1, p. 33. In its emphasis, the chapter paraphrases Isaiah 58.
28. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, part. VIII, "On Fasting," chap. X, pp. 108-9.
29. *Letters* I, p. 136, Note 3. So Tyerman and Clayton understood it, Tyerman I, p. 94.
30. Before June, he had left Oxford for Manchester. Clayton's letter is given in Tyerman I, pp. 94-5.
31. *The Constitutions*, book VII, sec. II, chap. XXIII, p. 469.
32. Tyerman I, p. 94.
33. *The Constitutions*, vol. VII, book VII, chap. XXIV, p. 472. Also, chap. XXXV, whose title is "A Prayer, with Thanksgiving, Declarative of God's Providence Over the Beings He Has Made."
34. *Ibid.*, book VIII, chap. XXXVII, p. 496.
35. Galatians 4:9-10.
36. Jesus did not specify the contents of the cup as wine. As it was physically, His name for it was the "fruit of the vine." The fruit of the vine is unfermented grape juice. Wine is the fruit of this juice, plus its alteration by the agencies of fermentation.
37. I John 5:6,8. For Clement of Alexandria's use of this symbolism, see his book, "The Instructor," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. II, p. 242.
38. *Letters* II, pp. 319-20.
39. *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley*, by J. Ernest Rattenbury, Epworth Press, London, 1948, p. 205. Numbers 32 and 37 are also good examples.
40. Tyerman I, p. 94.
41. Hurst I, p. 187.

42. Tyerman I, p. 93.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
44. Hurst I, p. 187. Tyerman quotes her as in nonagreement with him on "frequent communion as necessary to salvation nor a means of Christian perfection."
45. Hurst I, p. 247.
46. Curnock IV, p. 4.
47. Such meetings came to be called "Class Meetings" and existed widely among Methodists in the United States. The writer attended many of these meetings, both as a boy and as a member. Confession in them was not required by anyone of anyone but was at the need and judgment of the individual member: in this way, it was often used. Further, both confession, testimony, exposition and exhortation were overshadowed by praise, song, amen, gladness—all done with an unplanned but orderly heartiness and spontaneity; and all overlaid by a lively sense of the presence of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Much of the present Church has nothing like it.
48. Simon I, p. 104. This was nothing new. In 1699, Samuel Wesley, Sr., wrote a long letter about Societies existing then. Clarke, pp. 124ff.
49. Accounts of this will be found in Simon I, pp. 323-9; and, in more detail, in Curnock II, pp. 321ff.
50. It was Charles who had young Morgan put in John's care. *Letters* I, p. 153.
51. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 141, 143.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
53. Curnock I, p. 468.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. *Letters* I, p. 148.
2. Student Richard had purchased a greyhound, which, against university rule, he kept in his room. His father ordered: "Banish your dog immediately." *Letters* I, p. 157.
3. Curnock I, pp. 448-9. When the Wesleys left for Georgia, Richard Morgan was at Gravesend to bid them farewell. *Ibid.*, p. 109, Note 5. For the quote, see his excellent letter to John Wesley, Tyerman I, pp. 131-2. It shows young Richard carrying on the work of the Holy Club at Oxford.

4. *Letters* I, p. 151.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
7. Tyerman I, p. 99.
8. *Letters* I, p. 134.
9. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 44.
10. Ecclesiastes 9:4-12.
11. Amos 3:3.
12. Malachi 3:16.
13. Hebrews 10:24-5.
14. Juan de Valdes ("Valdesso," in Italian), a contemporary of Martin Luther, was born at Cuenca, Castile, Spain, in 1500. In 1528, he wrote a criticism of Roman Catholicism and, fearing the Inquisition, he went to Italy, living at Naples. His home was the center of a religious circle. Avidly, he studied the Scriptures and wrote. He died in May, 1541. *Brit.* 22, pp. 942-3. See also, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, by G. C. Cell, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1935, p. 197.
15. *Letters* I, p. 170.
16. For some detail upon this condition, see Sermon IV, "Scriptural Christianity," on the text, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," Acts 4:31.
17. Nathan to David, II Sam. 12:7.
18. Began on May 28, 1725. *Letters* I, p. 15.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
20. *Ibid.*, I, 179-80.
21. *Ibid.*, I, p. 178.
22. As to its time, Curnock puts it "shortly after the friendship formed with Clayton," I, p. 468, Note 2. John met Clayton on April 20, 1732.

The data which John summarizes in his account of his quest, and which he puts before his meeting this contemplative man along with his stating he knew not where to go for any further help, appear to require a later date for this contact.

The man mentioned is not known certainly. Curnock says it could have been Law, Clayton, John Gambold, Hervey, or Hoole. I, p. 468, Note 2.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. *Letters* I, pp. 178-9.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 179, Note 1.
3. Song of Solomon 2:15.
4. Revelation 12:4.
5. *Letters* I, p. 179.
6. Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, section VI, lines 8-15.
7. John 15:15. See also, 5:20.
8. *Journal* for Feb. 1, 1738.
9. Hannah Ball had a Sunday school at High Wycombe in 1769, fourteen years before the similar work of Robert Raikes began. *Letters* v, p. 78.
10. Mary Bishop was a Class Leader in 1769. *Letters* v, p. 153. Even of a Men's Class. *Ibid.*, vi, p. 233. Hannah Ball, too, did like work. *Letters* vi, pp. 55, 79, 93.
11. Elizabeth Hurrell, *ibid.*, vi, p. 184.
12. Miss Ellen Gretton, "the daughter of a clergyman . . . joined the Methodist Society, and gave addresses. She never went into the pulpit, but sat with her bonnet on." *Letters* vii, p. 90.
13. *Ibid.*, III, p. 367. The "Spirit of Prayer" was published in 1749.
14. *Ibid.*
15. I John 4:1.
16. There are no letters to her until June, 1738.
17. *Letters* viii, pp. 268-9. This letter was not found until 1931. Its date is Feb. 14, 1734/5.
18. *Letters* viii, p. 269.
19. Hurst I, p. 223.
20. Tyerman I, p. 204.
21. There are puzzling data here. Clarke says, p. 276, he was 72 at his death: but on p. 81, he has him born in 1666, which would make him 69.
22. *Letters* II, p. 11.
23. Clarke, pp. 277-8.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Letters* I, p. 174.
27. Wesley seems to take Romans 6:10 and to refer it, not to the pre- and post-Christian phases of one's life here, but to that here and

that hereafter. It is an unnatural use of that text and another example of the un-Wesleyan character of this sermon.

28. Hebrews 5:8.
29. John 8:29.
30. By Robert Burns, stanzas 1, 2, 5.
31. Does Wesley accept here a second regeneration? Or does he differentiate between a birth of the Spirit here and another hereafter?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. "The steppe-borne horse had conveyed its nomad rider to the back doors of all the civilizations of the Old World; the ocean-borne ship conveyed its Western navigator to the front doors of all the civilizations on the face of the planet." *Historian's Approach to Religion*, Arnold Toynbee, Oxford Univ. Press, 1956, p. 148.
2. Proverbs 17:5.
3. *Letters* I, p. 190.
4. From his sermon at the "laying the foundation" of City Road Chapel in London, on Monday, April 21, 1777. Sermon LV, par. 4.
5. Clarke, p. 60.
6. *Brit.*, vol. 15, p. 596.
7. Clarke, p. 167. Archbishop Sharp requested a copy of the scheme, which is quoted by Clarke, pp. 167-9.
8. *Life of Cary*, George Smith, p. 24, written in 1884. Everyman's Library Edition. No date.
9. George Peck, editor of the 1851 Edition of Clarke's *Wesley Family*, observes: "It is remarkable that none of Mr. Wesley's biographers have adverted to the friendship subsisting between Mr. Samuel Wesley and Mr. Oglethorpe, as one of those links in the chain of cause and effect which led to the selection of Mr. John Wesley for the mission to Georgia; and more especially, as the appointment of the latter followed so soon after the date of the correspondence." P. 267, Note.
10. Curnock VIII, p. 283.
11. *Ibid.* Jackson says: "A pewter chalice and patine . . . until silver ones were had." P. 51.
12. Clarke, pp. 268-9.
13. Curnock III, p. 33.
14. See *Letters* I, pp. 7-8, and Quiller-Couch's *Hetty Wesley*, 1-18.
15. Clarke, pp. 168-70.

16. Tyerman I, p. 114. His name appears also as "Tomo-Chachi." Tyerman says there were "other Indians present. *Ibid.*
17. Hurst I, p. 233.
18. Jackson, p. 49.
19. Curnock I, p. 109, Note 2.
20. *Letters* I, p. 187.
21. "Unpolished" is a term he also used in depicting them.
22. "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," *Works* v, pp. 10-11.
23. Hurst I, p. 237.
24. James 2: 18,22.
25. This practice of the Wesleys was noted by Richard Morgan, Jr. *Letters* I, p. 148.
26. *Wesley and His Century*, W. H. Fitchett, N. Y., Eaton and Mains, 1908, p. 95. Mabel Brailsford wrote: "Dr. Burton's choice of a candidate for the appointment was as crack-brained as the appointment itself, and fell upon John Wesley." *A Tale of Two Brothers*, N. Y., Oxford University Press, 1954, p. 83.
27. The ample, ordered and compact account of the founding of Georgia by John Simon in the main is followed here. See his vol. I, chap. VII, pp. 106-25.
28. For further data upon these, see *Brit.*, vol. 9, p. 888; and *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 847.
29. Curnock I, p. 159, Note 1.
30. Hurst I, p. 232.
31. Somewhere I found the statement that a Rev. Henry Herbert was the first minister there, but none of the standard sources has any notice of such a minister.
32. *Letters* I, pp. 229-30.
33. Curnock I, p. 168, Note 2. Simon quotes a caustic letter from him about the colony's conditions, I, p. 109.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
35. Curnock VIII, p. 285.
36. That is: exacting, discriminating.
37. *Letters* II, p. 17.
38. Clarke, p. 571.
39. For the data on Salmon, Hall, Delamotte and Ingham, see Tyerman I, pp. 117-9.
40. Simon I, p. 112.

41. Jackson I, p. 112.
42. Simon I, p. 112. This is hardly his secretarial relation.
43. Brailsford, pp. 86, 85.
44. Simon I, pp. 112-3. On the future of James Hutton, see Tyerman I, p. 108, Note 2.
45. See the letters of Thorold and Hutton to John Wesley, in Tyerman I, p. 132.
46. *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield*, by John Gillies, D.D., Phila., Leary, Getz & Co., 1859, p. 33.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
48. *Letters* I, p. 204.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. Curnock I, pp. 106-9. Several persons wrote records of the voyage: Von Reck, pastor of the Saltzburgers, wrote one. Curnock, I, p. 140. John Wesley began his on Jan. 19, 1736, *ibid.*, p. 139. Ingham made copies of this, *ibid.*, pp. 107, 139; and wrote one of his own, *ibid.*, p. 107. Curnock draws from Ingham's, putting such extractions in square brackets.
2. Curnock I, p. 109, Note 8. Another person, "one of the colonists," asserted there were six ships in all. This might include "ships sailing from other ports," Curnock I, p. 146, Note.
3. Some of the delay was due to the fitting out of the *Hawk*. See the Gascoigne correspondence, Curnock VIII, pp. 291ff.
4. Tyerman I, p. 121. The use of the lot follows the mode used by the Disciples in Acts 1:24-6.
5. One of these was the Williams' charges, whose answer brought Wesley to making what he had never designed, and issuing the first "Extract" from his *Diaries*. The charges are in Curnock, I, pp. 85-86.
6. Curnock I, p. 196.
7. His *Diary* for this day has also this: "Began Deacon with Delamotte." Deacon has been met above. On lay baptism as valid, see Simon I, pp. 116-7, Note 2.
8. *Wesley and His Century*, by W. H. Fitchett, Third Printing, Eaton & Mains, N. Y., 1908, p. 98. See also Wesley's letter to Dr. Burton of Jan. 20, *Letters* I, p. 194.
9. Simon I, p. 137.
10. One such case occurred on Oct. 27. A Mr. Johnson, son of the

recently deceased Governor of S. Carolina, complained about the disturbance of his morning sleep by the prayers. To suit him, the meeting place was changed. Disgruntled over the lack of sailing winds, on Dec. 1, he left the ship; and afternoon prayer was returned to the great cabin; which, John wrote, was "One of the many blessings consequent upon his leaving us." Curnock I, pp. 114, Note 1 and 124-5. However, by Nov. 29th, John could write, "Mr. Johnson is kind," *ibid.*, I, p. 115 and entry for Nov. 27.

11. That is: "Conversed with him in private; not talked casually, but seriously and with a purpose." Curnock I, p. 111.
12. *Letters* I, pp. 15-6. Its preface upon how to read it or any book is a sketch of his own regular reading methods. It was a book frequently in John's hands.
13. His dates are 1506-52. It was on Nov. 15, 1536, that Xavier left Paris to prepare for his first contemplated mission to the Arabs of Palestine.
14. Gregory Lopez. *Simon* I, pp. 119-20.
15. Curnock I, pp. 115, 229.
16. *Ibid.*, I, p. 220. Curnock quotes parts of three. *Ibid.*
17. No. 437. Written by Johann Andreas Rothe; first published in 1727, and in the 1735 *Gesang-Buch*. Curnock I, p. 220. *The Methodist Hymnal* of 1878 has it, exactly as it is in that of 1849, No. 420, with the title, "The Soul's Anchorage."
18. No. 833, pp. 493-4. The author of this hymn is Paul Gerhardt. It appeared first in 1653. *Our Hymnody*, R. G. McCutchan, Meth. Book Concern, N. Y., 1937, p. 267.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See his *Christian Perfection*, Meth. Book Concern, p. 10.
21. *Simon* I, pp. 119-122; and Curnock I, pp. 110ff. *Diary* quotes.
22. Curnock I, pp. 116-7. The three chapters are Matthew 5, 6, 7.
23. A person entering the Methodist ministry is still asked, "Will you visit from house to house?" *Meth. Discipline*, Par. 345, Item 15. It is listed also as a pastor's duty. *Ibid.*, Item 3.
24. Curnock I, p. 117.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, I, p. 224, Note 1. Thomas Hird became a magistrate at Frederica, that part of the parish allotted to Charles. His hardships there and Hird's loyalty to him accord the designation a quite literal content. A second constable, Mr. Davison, Charles called his "Good Samaritan."

27. I Cor. 15:26.
28. Curnock I, p. 123.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
30. Hurst I, p. 239. Two brothers, Alexander and Charles Grimaldi, aged 21 and 19, were from London. Both served Oglethorpe, the latter as an interpreter. The former enraged the General. His son William was an "active member" of the London Methodist Society all his life. Curnock vi, pp. 53-4, Note 5.
31. Curnock I, p. 137.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 126, Note 2.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
34. Taylor, pp. 53-4, 57-8, 352-4, 381, 420.
35. Matthew 20:13, 22:12, 26:50.
36. So Curnock describes the *Diary's* entry, I, p. 138.
37. Curnock has a résumé of Wesley's preaching on hell, *ibid.*, p. 139.
38. His *Diary* records the one on Saturday, but his *Journal* does not.
39. Jeremiah 32: 6ff.
40. Sermon, "The Nature of Enthusiasm," No. XXXVII, from the text of Acts 26:24. He thus defines the world's idea of enthusiasm: "That utter contempt of all temporal things, and steady pursuit of things eternal; that divine conviction of things not seen; that rejoicing in the favour of God; that happy, holy love of God; and that testimony of his Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God: that is, in truth, the whole spirit, and life, and power of the religion of Jesus Christ.
 John Wesley's understanding of enthusiasts was: 1. "Those who imagine they have grace which they have not." 2. "Those who imagine they have such gifts from God which they have not." 3. "Those who think to attain the end without using the means." 4. "The imagining those things to be owing to the providence of God, which are not owing thereto."
41. Curnock I, p. 141.
42. Ingham records there were two other ships with her. Curnock viii, p. 302.
43. Without Curnock's interspersing them here, John's language is quite disjointed.
44. Curnock viii, pp. 302-3.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. *National Geographic*, Sept. 1926, pp. 296-7. Curnock I, p. 190.
2. *Ibid.*, for Feb., 1934, p. 244.
3. Curnock I, p. 405.
4. *Ibid.*, pars. 13-14.
5. *National Geographic*, Feb., 1934.
6. Tyerman I, p. 128. There was controversy also with Carolina over trading rights with the Indians. *Letters* I, p. 203.
7. *Letters* I, p. 196.
8. Tyerman I, p. 142.
9. Curnock I, p. 155.
10. Wesley's words were: "All were *méthussi* (that is, 'drunk'), *ibid.*, p. 149.
11. For a sketch of the rise and procedure of such schools, see John's *Journal* for Aug. 21, 1738. Curnock II, pp. 58-61.
12. Curnock includes a statement from Ingham's *Journal* that Spangenberg was going to Pennsylvania to bring some Moravians thence to Georgia. This is hardly true. It is more likely he was to visit Pennsylvania to find opportunity for the settlement of Moravians there.
13. Approximate dates, depending upon when one begins his reckoning. Spangenberg's could begin in 1726, when he began lecturing in theology; or when he began teaching children. I begin Wesley's with his taking charge of the Holy Club in 1729.
14. Simon I, p. 128.
15. Curnock II, p. 60, Note.
16. Simon I, p. 129.
17. Matthew 10:24.
18. Hebrews 7:7.
19. It is sixty miles off the northeast coast of Mindanao in the Philippine Islands. Its depth is 35,000 feet, one of the deep-deeps of the known oceans.
20. So Wesley spelled it at first.
21. See his fine justification of John Wesley, *Journal* for Feb. 9, 1736.
22. Augustine's *Confessions*, Everyman's Library Edition, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1913, book III, chapters IV-V.
23. Augustine's dates are A.D. 354-430. Jerome's, A.D. 340-420.
24. He had much to do with forming the New Testament Canon. The Vulgate (Latin) Version of the Bible was his great work.

25. Matthew 11:25.
26. James 4:6.
27. Psalms 25:9.
28. Curnock asks, "May we not think of Colonel Oglethorpe and Captain Hermsdorf as the first Methodist soldiers?" I, p. 155.
29. One of the women.
30. On one of his returns to England, Oglethorpe brought some Georgia Indians with him. Tyerman says in April, 1735. Vol. I, p. 114. Certainly those who visited Wesley could not have been in England before that visit. Bishop Hurst seems to be correct in stating Oglethorpe did so in 1734. Vol. I, p. 233. With him, Church agrees, giving much detail of that visit. Pp. 60-1. It was on this visit that Tomo-Chachi got the English garb and form of greeting.
31. He had in mind the rival claims of South Carolina and Georgia to the agreed areas of Indian trading. The former, an older and more important colony, seems to have insisted upon their pre-Georgia right to trade in that area.
 The Chickasaw chiefs, Paustoobee and Mingo Mattaw, claimed the general distraught condition was due to French and Spanish schemes to possess Georgia. When Wesley spoke to them about studying the Bible, their answer was, "We have no time now but to fight. If we should ever be at peace, we should be glad to know." Curnock I, p. 250.
32. One wonders what John meant by opportunity for Indian work. On Nov. 23, 1736, he wrote he saw "less prospect of preaching to the Indians than he had the first day he set foot in America"; and nearly a year later, on Oct. 7, 1737, he records "no possibility as yet of instructing the Indians." Is he ready for that work?
33. His *Diary* has this: "Baptized Mary Welch by Trine Immersion."
34. Psalms 84:2.
35. I Tim. 1:2, and Titus 1:4.
36. I Cor. 2:4.
37. Upon his own ordination of others, see Curnock VII, p. 15 and Note 2.
38. On March 6, John Wesley had a "long conversation" with a John Reiner, who had walked from Philadelphia, Pa., to Savannah to find among the Moravians, of whom he had heard, the rest of soul "he had so long sought in vain." Curnock I, pp. 175-6. How much this man's quest turned Moravian attention to Pennsylvania,

and how much it encouraged Wesley are not stated. However, John Wesley's lengthy account of it indicates it had for him more than an ordinary meaning.

39. It is likely that John was eager to begin residence in the rectory; for Oglethorpe had promised to build him one; and, on March 9, he visited the site selected by the General for it. Curnock I, p. 180.
40. At times, the Germans gave him use of their meeting house. Simon I, p. 148. He used also the "New Statehouse" at Frederica. Curnock I, pp. 193, 213, Note 1.
41. *Journal* for the day.
42. Ezekiel 3: 4-11.
43. *Letters* I, p. 196.
44. "Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous," Robert Burns, stanza 2.
45. Jackson, p. 60.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.
47. So John spelled the name.
48. Jackson, pp. 77-8.
49. The chaplain of the soldiers?
50. To have baptized Mrs. Welch's baby by immersion six weeks ago, but to do otherwise now, would have meant both a breach of Church order and partiality.
51. In the Williamson affair, Mr. Parker sided with Mr. Causton.
52. Vol. I, p. 121, Note.
53. II Cor. 2:16.
54. Sermon LXX.
55. *The Life of Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg*, Translation from the German by Charles T. Ledderhose, 1855, p. 35.
56. Curnock, p. 250, 259.
57. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 247, 297.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-205.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 396-7.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 345-6. One of these was a "Dr. Nunes," a physician. Sermon XCVI, Introduction.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 297.

66. See his description of them in his long entry on Georgia for Dec. 2, 1737, pars. 22ff. One reason why he did not learn Creek was his preference for Chickasaw. *Letters* I, p. 228. However, Ingham, "in Dr. Byrom's shorthand," had compiled a catalog of half the words in the Indian language. Tyerman I, p. 135. It was of the Creek tongue. *Letters* I, p. 228.
67. Stanzas 13-18 of Charles Wesley's hymn, whose seventh stanza begins "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing."
68. Simon, pp. 148-8. June 28 (Curnock I, p. 240), John began to study Spanish. By July 2, he can translate this hymn. The quote is stanza two of the five of Hymn 598 of the *Methodist Hymnal* of 1848.
69. In the *Journal* for July 6, 1781, John referred to Paustoobee's certainty as that of one who "knew better" than some contemporary English writers, who saw only chance and fortune ruling the world.
70. Curnock I, pp. 297-8. His detailed description of the Indians of Georgia he gives in his *Journal*, *ibid.*, pp. 406ff.
71. The detail is given by Curnock in his restoration to the *Journal* of a fragment torn out by someone, Vol. I, pp. 260-66 and Note on p. 261. The whole is a sequel to the sordid lies Mrs. Welch and Mrs. Hawkins detailed to Charles Wesley about their illicit relations with Oglethorpe during the voyage. These unfounded reports, Charles was inclined to believe, an attitude which brought upon him the vigorous aversion of the General.
72. The quote is from Ecclesiastes 7:26, part of the paragraph on the author's failure to find the trustworthy woman in a thousand.
73. *Letters* I, p. 228.
74. Curnock I, p. 272, Note 1.
75. *Letters* I, p. 229.
76. *George Whitefield, Prophet-Preacher*, by Edward S. Ninde, Abingdon Press, 1924, p. 21.
77. Gillies, pp. 27-8.
78. Jackson, pp. 72-3.
79. *Letters* I, pp. 205, 204.
80. Or, since he had a letter from John in December, in which are the words, "Only Delamotte is with me . . ." but which are not in John's *Journal* or its rescript of Sept. 10, John might have written him a second one. Gillies refers to "some letters from Ingham and the Wesleys," p. 31. A second letter would allow time for John's

learning of Whitefield's success as a reason for asking him to come to Georgia.

81. See Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, in what might be called its third chapter.
82. Hurst II, pp. 821-22.
83. Part of the area secured from the Indians by the Walking Purchase of 1737. *Stories of Pennsylvania*, Walton and Brumbaugh, Amer. Book Co., N. Y., 1897, pp. 39-44.
84. He built its foundation. Then, unable to bring his Moravian workmen to his theological views (he had become a Calvinist, Hurst I, p. 422), he ordered them, including Peter Böhler, to leave Nazareth.
85. Acts 11:25.
86. From 1767 on, his preachers were very successful in the New World.
87. Curnock I, p. 282, Note.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 275, *Diary* for Tues., Sept. 14.
89. Simon I, p. 137.
90. Curnock I, p. 280, Note 1.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 283, Note.
92. This translation of Wesley's is from the *Methodist Hymnal* of 1849, Hymn 437. It is found also in the *Hymnal* of 1878. The hymn of Richter had ten stanzas in the Reformed Church *Gesang-Buch*, published by Christoph Saur, third edition, Germantown, Penna., 1772. In each of the above *Methodist Hymnals*, it is in the section on "Justification."
93. This, too, is quoted from the *Methodist Hymnal* of 1849, Hymn 425. It also is in that of 1878. In each, it is in the section on "Penitence." The German original had ten stanzas, all of which Hurst gives. I, pp. 291-2.
94. "Locksley Hall," line 133.
95. Author of the hymn, "Christians Awake," No. 93, *Methodist Hymnal*.
96. Her aunt, Mrs. Causton, called her "Philky." Curnock I, p. 323.
97. In time order, these were: Betty Kirkham, Mary Pendarves (a widow), Sophia Hopkey, Grace Murray (a widow), and Molly Vazeille (a widow). Only the last did he marry, the marriage being mostly unhappy. After her death, gossips speculated about John and Elizabeth Ritchie.
98. One was the threat of a Mr. Millichamp to murder her if she

- married another than him. Curnock I, pp. 312, 329. He had served a term in prison. The other was the domineering of Mr. Williamson, who was courting her and whom she married.
99. Curnock I, p. 334.
 100. *Letters* of Feb. 12, 1789, and Sept. 1, 1790. Both were written to preachers of his, the latter to Jonathan Edmondson, who had lost either his betrothed or his wife. Referring therein to the Ezekiel passage and his reading of it in Georgia soon after his breaking with Sophy, he wrote, "It was as if I was thrust through with a sword."
 101. Curnock VIII, p. 147, where Clayton urges it upon Mr. Hall who had jilted Kezzy Wesley and married her sister Martha (Patty).
 102. The General, as well as other notables in the colony, favored the match, partly for its practical effect of tying John to Savannah.
 103. Matthew 19:12.
 104. Whitehead II, p. 22.
 105. Matthew 26:46. See the interview with Sophy, Curnock I, pp. 333-5, especially John's words, "I can still be your friend, though I should not stay in America."
 106. I John 5:4. Something of what John might have said can be seen in his two sermons from the same Epistle: Sermon XVII, "Marks of the New Birth," on 3:9; and "The Great Privilege of those that are born of God," on 3:9, Sermon XIX.
 107. Curnock I, p. 298.
 108. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. *Letters* I, pp. 207-10.
2. *Letters* v, p. 163.
3. Meaning, "To the desert"—that is, for solitude.
4. *Letters* VI, p. 128.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-3.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
7. *Letters* VII, p. 89.
8. *Enthusiasm, A Chapter in the History of Religion*, R. A. Knox, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, 1950, p. 433.
9. Hurst I, p. 189.
10. See the phrase, "Most of our little flock," in Note 4 of this chapter.

11. *Journal* for May 24, 1738, part 5.
12. *Letters* III, p. 122.
13. *Letters* IV, pp. 298-9.
14. The gerundive of the Latin verb, *mirari*, meaning "to admire." The gerundive means "must" or "ought to be admired."
15. Or two, as his birthday is reckoned recently.
16. *Letters* VI, p. 84.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Letters* VII, p. 63, written May 21, 1781.
19. Hymn 334 in *The Methodist Hymnal* of 1935, for example. For the other side of her works, see his remarks in Sermon CXXI, par. 14.
20. *Letters* VI, p. 125.
21. *Letters* VII, p. 374.
22. Written Sept. 25, 1789. He died March 2, 1791.
23. Hurst I, p. 189. So also did Charles on August 31 and Sept. 9, 1737. Jackson, p. 104 and *Letters* I, p. 241.
24. *Letters* I, p. 163.
25. Hurst I, p. 235.
26. *Letters* I, p. 239.
27. Sermon XCVIII, part II, sec. 9, "On Redeeming the Time," has what Law wrote about early rising.
28. Sermon C, sec. 3, "On the Education of Children."
29. Hurst I, p. 313.
30. Matthew 3:14-5, as explained from the Greek. See also John 3:27-36.
31. Matthew 11:2-6.
32. The nearest they came to it was upon the occasion of a visit to Law by Charles Wesley and Mr. T. Bray on August 10, 1739. During the interview, Law discounted religious experience, criticized Whitefield's procedures, agreed with the Methodist understanding of faith, maintained all men had it, and claimed joy in the Holy Ghost was the most dangerous thing God could give.
 Having had his experience of conversion fifteen months ago, Charles said, "I told him my experience." Law replied, "Then I am far below you (if you are right), not worthy to bear your shoes." His account of the visit, Charles ended thus: "He often disclaimed advising, seeing we had the Spirit of God; but mended upon our hands, and at last came almost quite over." Jackson, p. 162.
33. It could have been in 1788. See Sermon CXII, part I, pars. 2, 3.

34. Joseph Trapp, 1679-1747. He was a "hard student," McClintock & Strong, Vol. x, pp. 527-8. Law answered Trapp; and, in 1748, Wesley published part of that reply. *Letters* v, p. 248, Note 2.
35. Sermon CXII, part I, par. 1.
36. *Letters* III, p. 345.
37. Jackson, p. 173.
38. *Letters* v, p. 338. The name is spelled Böhme, Boehm, Behm, Behmont and Behmen. Wesley might have read both in Georgia.
39. *Letters* VI, p. 292. See similar data in *Letters* v, p. 338.
40. *Letters* I, pp. 207-10.
41. This omits some of the beginning and close of the letter and collects the sentences which bear upon the same parts of the theme.
42. *Letters* VI, p. 44.
43. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James, 31st Printing, Longmans, Green, and Co., N. Y., 1919, p. 408.
44. Jackson, p. 86.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
47. John's *Journal* for given dates.
48. *Letters* I, pp. 241, 242.
49. Jackson, p. 109.
50. It could have been less and might have been more; but, in my judgment, not much more.
51. *Letters* I, p. 239.
52. Hurst I, p. 189.
53. Romans 3:20.
54. *Ibid.*, 7:12.
55. *Ibid.*, 7:18.
56. Published this year.
57. Wesley seems to deny or to modify this: "I very rarely mention his books in public, nor are they in the way of one in a hundred of those whom he terms my people; meaning, I suppose, the people called Methodists. I had, therefore, no temptation, any more than power, to forbid the use of them to the Methodists in general. Whosoever informed Mr. Law of this, wanted either sense or honesty." *Journal*, Sept. 16, 1760.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Given in *Letters* III, pp. 332-370.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 333. By 1756, his work was in full swing.
3. Unless specified or indicated otherwise, all quotes by Wesley are from Law's two books. I have rearranged the order of these quotes in some cases to show their relations, where these are clear.
4. John put it in the Greek, *Proton Pseudos*, *Letters* III, p. 108.
5. John took wrath, anger and justice "as nearly synonymous." *Letters* III, p. 346.
6. So quoted by John.
7. Anna Maria Schurmann, 1607-78, born at Cologne; lived mostly at Utrecht; died at Wiervert. "Possessed of extraordinary intellectual qualities, which were further developed by careful training." Could read and write in eight languages; proficient in mathematics and history; skilled in music, drawing, painting, carving, embroidery. Called the "Tenth Muse" and "Celebrated Muse of Utrecht." McClintock & Strong, Vol. IX, p. 442.
8. *Letters* I, p. 20.
9. Written to Mary Bishop on Sept. 19, 1773. *Letters* VI, pp. 43-4.
10. *Journal*, Dec. 10, 1788.
11. *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1788.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. John says "we were four in all"; but Tyerman claims there were four besides John. I, p. 164.
2. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 164-5, Footnote 1.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jackson, pp. 96, 114.
5. Hurst IV, p. 41. His return to America was seriously considered by him and by others, beginning in the end of 1769 and continuing for over two years to 1772. See *Letters* V, pp. 167, 177, 182, 183, 212, 267, 273, 303.
6. *Letters* V, p. 267.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
8. Means "gravity of bearing," a transliterated Greek word.
9. The first part of his quote is from Genesis 49:6; the second could be from Jeremiah 6:16.
10. So Ronald Knox, pp. 435-6.

11. Wesley's words are: "Mon. 9, and following days." Since he records on the 13th, "My spirit revived; so that from this day I had no more of that fearfulness and heaviness, which before almost continually weighed me down," it could not have been longer than the 9th to the 14th.
12. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Scribner's, 1919, Vol. v, pp. 284, 287, 289, and 437-8.
13. John used the Latin, *in orco*: that is, "in the infernal regions," or "in death." Curnock I, p. 417.
14. Ecc. 5:18-20.
15. I Cor. 15:32.
16. Quoted in his *Christian Perfection*, Meth. Book Concern, no date, p. 10.
17. *Letters* I, pp. 221-222.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
19. Curnock I, p. 435. His plans for Negro work were noted in Chapter 18.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. Curnock I, p. 436.
2. De Schweinitz spelled it "Weynanz." The other two men he lists as Frederick Wenzel Neisser and Schullius. See Note 8 below.
3. *Letters* II, p. 180.
4. Hebrews 13:2.
5. A biography of him is needed.
6. So de Schweinitz.
7. A "Reading Master": a teacher who read to others. The Holy Club did much of this. It was necessary then and in earlier years, since books were fewer and many folk could not read.
8. The data of Note 2 and of the biography of Peter Böhler is from two articles in *The Moravian*, official periodical of that Church, which articles appeared in its issues of October 24 and Nov. 7, 1861. A third part came in the number for Nov. 14. These formed part of a series on the early founders of the Moravian Church in America and were written by the periodical's editor, Edmund de Schweinitz. I was given freely permission to use them, through the kindness of Bishop S. H. Gapp, archivist of the rich records of the Moravians, now in their Archives Building in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Abel Stevens, Methodist historian, referred to "Böhler's autobiography and letters, at Bethlehem, Pa.," and quotes from a letter of Böhler's to Zinzendorf, written May 6, 1738. He does not quote from the autobiography; nor does he give any of the data I have in this chapter. He has a résumé of Böhler's contacts with the Wesleys, taken from John's *Journal*. See his *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Carlton & Lanahan, N. Y., 1864, pp. 34-5 and Note 15 on p. 35.

Hurst, Vol. I, p. 285, quotes Böhler's account of his response to Spangenberg's statement, but in a much briefer form. Whence he obtained his data, he does not say.

9. For the date of July 22, see Jackson, p. 73.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
17. His known illness and the unusual length of the return voyage could have made such a report quite credible.
18. Jackson, pp. 100-1.
19. His poem, "Stanzas on the Same Occasion"—that is, upon death.
20. His "Hound of Heaven," lines 61-90, *World's Great Religious Poetry*, Caroline Hill (ed.), Macmillan, N. Y., 1925.
21. Jackson, p. 106.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.* Quoted from Spangenberg's *Life of Zinzendorf*.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 101. He moved William Delamotte and his two sisters; but their mother, fearing their turning, sent them to London away from Charles Wesley's influence.
27. Hurst I, p. 268.
28. *Letters* I, pp. 227-8.
29. I find yet no indication what this idol is.
30. That of Jan. 20, 1737. Jackson, p. 106. See Note 28 above.
31. His *Journal* for Nov. 5, 1737 has this: "Went to hear Mr. Whitefield preach, not with the persuasive words of man's wisdom but with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The Church

will not contain the multitudes that throng to hear him." *Proceedings of the Wesleyan Historical Society*, England, Vol. xv, p. 168. The yearly issues of this Society are in the Moravian Archives at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

32. *Our Hymnody*, McCutchan, p. 317.
33. Ecc. 8:6. See also 3:11 and 9:12.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. This and subsequent references to "MS 1842" are to a manuscript in the Moravian Archives at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It is in German script. The material is in Böhler's letters, for the most part. Dating his work "Jan. 1842," some unknown person wrote this MS Dec. 5. The same year, a certain man who abbreviated his name thus: "Falk—," above it wrote, "*Imprimatur Breslau 12/5 – 42.*"

A few years ago, it was translated by Dr. W. N. Schwarze and Bishop S. H. Gapp. The former was curator of the Archives before Bishop Gapp. The latter generously allowed me full use of this MS.

2. See I Timothy 3:16.
3. The Latin is, "Mi frater, mi frater, excoquenda est ista tua philosophia."
4. Jackson, p. 110.
5. Letter of March 6, MS 1842.
6. That is, the Moravians.
7. Part of this is from the de Schweinitz translation of MS 1842; part from that of Dr. Schwarze and Bishop Gapp.
8. Spangenberg's of John is brief, and of John only.
9. Hebrews 7:7.
10. This is the translation of Dr. Schwarze and Bishop Gapp. Dr. de Schweinitz has it thus: "Our method of believing in the Saviour." Method is a general term, void of detail.

While discussing this MS 1842 with Bishop Gapp, he informed me that when he and Dr. Schwarze decided to translate it, they agreed that it should adhere to the original, literal sense of the German, adhere closely to it. He then showed me their papers with the renderings and re-renderings, interlineated with the text. The fact of their adherence to this rule for translating is the differ-

ence in this quote between the translation of Dr. de Schweinitz and that of Dr. Schwartz and Bishop Gapp.

11. MS 1842.
12. A medical powder, mixed with honey or sugar and taken internally.
13. Letter to Samuel. Jackson, p. 111.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
15. MS 1842. Letter of March 8.
16. Written in August, 1874, *Life of Burns*, Lockhart, Everyman's Library, p. 254.
17. *Our Hymnody*, McCutchan, p. 200.
18. Jackson, p. 106, quoting it, omits the case of the young lady. The full quote here is from Charles' *Journal*, the publication of only two volumes of which was done in 1929. John Telford wrote their preface. No others have been published, not being warranted by demand. The quote is from Vol. II, p. 113.
19. John 1:13.
20. Jackson, p. 78.
21. I Cor. 15:26.
22. MS 1842, March 8.
23. John 16:8-9.
24. Matthew 22: 37-8.
25. Jackson, p. 111.
26. From Sept. 23, 1742, to Jan. 1, 1743, there is a break in Charles' *Journal*. In this period, the brothers "united in the publication of a fifth volume of hymns," one of which was "Wrestling Jacob." Jackson, p. 249.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1. Unless specified otherwise, I follow Wesley's dates here.
2. MS 1842.
3. That is, beginnings, first principles.
4. For his matured understanding of what saving faith is, see his sermon, "Salvation by Faith," Sermon I, part I, par. 5. It was preached before the university at St. Mary's, Oxford, June 18, 1738, or soon after Aldersgate.
5. II Cor. 4:7.
6. Tyerman I, pp. 174-5.

7. Romans 8:7.
8. I Cor. 2:14.
9. Böhler employed it twice. This translation is that of Dr. Schwarze and Bishop Gapp. The first use of it, they render by this—"a thoroughgoing fellowship." There could be a connection here between Böhler's use of the term and John Wesley's using it to designate small groups of especially earnest persons in his Societies, which groups he named "Bands."
10. *Journal* for March 7, 1938, Curnock I, p. 446.
11. II Cor. 5:17.
12. Curnock I, p. 447.
13. This is oversight. It should be three weeks. Peter Böhler's entire stay in England at this time began on Feb. 7, or a day or two before; and ran through May 4, or three months. He certainly was not at Oxford all that time. According to John Wesley, he and Böhler left London for Oxford on Feb. 17, and Böhler remained until March 10th—practically three weeks.
14. He will become a prominent Moravian.
15. De Schweinitz's biographical sketch of Böhler.
16. This is his second visit there.
17. De Schweinitz's biography.
18. *Journal* for May 24, 1738, par. 11.
19. *Letters* v, p. 203.
20. *Ibid.*, vii, p. 319.
21. John 5:25.
22. Romans 10:8.
23. *Letters* I, p. 237.
24. *Ibid.*, I, p. 275.
25. *Ibid.*, Editor's Note.
26. The datings of these days is varied but accurate enough to follow quite clearly.
27. *Journal*, Nov. 25, 1746.
28. The German is, *auf den Kopf geschlagen*: "struck on the head."
29. This means John did not have this faith yet.
30. The German is *blütigen Namen*: "blood-covered name."
31. Böhler MS.
32. Written by Christian F. Richter, 1676-1711. When twenty, he began to write hymns, and "thirty-three excellent and deeply spiritual hymns are attributed to him." McClintock & Strong, Vol. ix, p. 21.

One of them is this fine penitential hymn. The German of line 1 is, *Hier legt mein Sinn sich vor dir nieder*, which translated quite literally and in its word order reads, "Here lays my Soul itself before thee low."

The given copy of it is that of the English Moravians.

John Wesley paraphrased its last two stanzas. These and the first two as quoted here compose a hymn in the *Methodist Hymnals* of 1848, 1878, and 1905. That of 1935 does not have it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. Matthew 15: 1-3, 9.
2. Jackson, p. 94.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 136, 136.
7. MS 1842. The German is, *Ein recht herzliches gesprach*: "A right hearty (or warmhearted, affectionate, loving) talk."
8. *Ibid.* The German is, *Er kehre sich nicht daran*: "He turned himself not thereat."
9. The Greek is *skandalon* and *morion*, or "scandal" and "moron." The first word means, primarily, the bait-holding device of a trap. The second designated some thing or person as dull or sluggish or foolish. The noun "moron" is the transliteration of the Greek, not its translation.
10. Telford writes: "Böhler left for Carolina on May 4. It was probably a letter to one of Wesley's friends in America." *Letters* I, p. 238, Note 4. It might have been for one of the Moravian or English or German pastors.
11. MS 1842.
12. Psalm 130:3.
13. Zechariah 9:9.
14. John 1:12. The Greek is *exousia* meaning "right"—that is, an inherent power or status or authority, such as in the right to political freedom, the right to think for oneself.
15. Revelation 22:14. This is the Bible's final Beatitude. Here the King James translates the Greek properly. This and that of the above note are the two grand rights of any man in the New Testament.
16. Curnock I, 458.

17. See Sermon 55, par. 4; and Curnock I, p. 458.
18. Meeting at Hutton's for a while, it soon met in Fetter-lane. There, a division occurred, and Wesley and some others left, meeting at the Foundery for the first on Wednesday, July 23, 1740. See Curnock II, p. 371, and p. 316, Note 1.
19. Hurst I, p. 334.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Journal*, May 1, 1741: "In the evening I went to a little Lovefeast which Peter Böhler made for those ten, who joined together on this day three years, to confess our faults one to another. Seven of us were present; one being sick, and two unwilling to come." Curnock II, pp. 450-1.
22. Following a specified list at a meeting in Fetter-lane the next New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 1739, Curnock II, p. 121.
23. Epistle of James, 5:16.
24. I Cor. 14: 27-33.
25. A practice at Herrnhut, as John Wesley found when visiting there in the summer of 1738. Curnock II, pp. 14, 28.
26. MS 1842.
27. So John called it. Curnock I, p. 459.
28. Jackson estimates they "scarcely amounted to fifty," p. 16. Considering his Oxford contacts, this might appear a small number, especially since Böhler could use Latin.
29. Jackson, p. 130.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-3.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.
34. From John 16:9, it is certain Jesus regarded it as a root and a ruinous sin.
35. Gambold had become a mystic.
36. Telford says it could have been either John Gambold, Charles Kinchin, Molly Kinchin, or John Clayton. *Letters* I, p. 244.
37. He added the note: "The proper Christian faith." Curnock I, pp. 464-5.
38. Exodus, chap. 3.
39. *Ibid.*, 4:11-12.
40. *Ibid.*, v. 13.
41. Hebrews 6:1.
42. Romans 7:24.

43. See Wesley's *New Testament Notes*, on Rom. 7:24, Epworth Press, London, Reprint of 1925.
44. Chap. 20:31.
45. John 6:29. See also v. 45; and 5:38.
46. The Grace Murray affair. *Letters* III, pp. 15-8, 20-1, 22-4, 29.
47. He wrote it in the Greek, then quoted the English.
48. The Greek is *koinonoi*.
49. Mark 12:34.
50. So do recent translations render the Greek *nounechos*, meaning "having understanding."
51. Deut. 6:4-5. *Shema* is the first word, "hear," in Hebrew.
52. *New Testament Notes*, on Mark 12:34.
53. The Greek is *ou makran*, meaning "not far in space"; "not long in time."
54. Hurst I, p. 334.
55. There is nothing new in John's forming this Society, except its Moravian contact and, perhaps, some of its ways. There were other such Societies in various places. When the Wesleys entered Cornwall, their lead was the report of an existing Society there. *Letters* I, p. 358. It was at St. Ives, under a John Nance. At St. Genny's was another, under a John Thompson. When they reached out to Newcastle, they found one there which, by 1742, had been existing for "many years." Curnock III, p. 15.
56. John 1:13.
57. *Ibid.*, 6:44.
58. These quotes on Romans are from the Preface in the Holman Edition of Luther's *Works*, 1932. The translation is by C. M. Jacobs. They are in vol. VI, pp. 451-2.

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